

This Book, with 397 others, was
written by Rev. T. STEPHENS, who was
28 years Pastor of the Baptist Church
of Colchester, in the Parish and Deanery
of the same, and his successors, for
the time being.—

Faithfulness
O F
G O D ,
C O N S I D E R E D and C L E A R E D
In the great E V E N T S of His
V V O R D .
O R , A
S E C O N D P A R T
O F T H E
Fulfilling of the Scripture.

Where its Convincing and near Approach
before Mens eyes, with some clear Dis-
covery thereof in the Work and Con-
duct of Providence this Day about the
Church, is shewed forth.

L O N D O N ,
Printed for Thomas Parkhurst at the Bible and Three
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IT seemeth a sad conjunction in this day of a strange security most are fallen into, when such dismal awakenings presages of judgment: the, a crying voice from the Lord, but yet a deaf ear; how the awe and dread of light, which used to appear on mens conscience though otherways haters thereof, is now so far gone, as if the present age had found a new way to escape the manifold discoveries of the truth, which was not formerly known; which too sadly presages some strange and astonishing strokes of judgment must speak that, which with greatest contempt hath been rejected from the Word: Oh that there might be an awaking to duty yet *before the decree bring forth*, Zeph.2.2. For though repentance can never be in vain, where it is in truth, yet it is clear, this may come too late to prevent a temporal stroke; and is there not cause to expect the Lord will take some strange way to plead for making himself known to be God, and enforce the certainty and truth of his Word, since men have got so far beyond the reach of an ordinary cure, that the unheard-of wickedness of this time is come to seek its patrony from Atheism; and the alone relief most seem to have against the tormenting fears of fu-

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ture things, and an eternal state, is by weakening their assent to the truth ; but they cannot weaken the truth, which stands unshaken, and brings such an assurance therewith to those who know it, as can fully quiet and support the Soul, though they were left alone to walk in this way. Yea; though the power and life of godliness lye deep and hid, and to the experienced Christian alone is such a demonstration of the certainty of supernatural truths, and their verification to the Soul, that none else can know at a distance what they feel and assuredly enjoy ; yet are the *indicia* so obvious, I mean such clear, rational, and convincing evidences of the same, that how men possibly should get these put by, and rejected in this age, is not easie to comprehend ; but that a real irritation and torment upon their spirit, from such clearness of evidence now accompanying the truth, is the great influencing cause of so prodigious an Atheism this day within the Church, beyond what hath been in times of greater darkness. For clearing this, and to bear some witness to the unspotted *Faithfulness* of God, which as the Sun in its strength keeps its course whatever clouds intervene, amidst the darkness and confusions of this time, is this following discourse intended.

For the Subject, it is great, yea that wherein the whole superstructure of truth and godliness stands ; so as it calls for some awful distance, in our nearest converse therewith ; but such where with an unspeakable delight we may see its ancient standing, the fulness of evidence it brings

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brings therewith; these near and sensible approaches this hath to a Christians Soul; that surprising brightness with which it is still found to break up, when at the darkest, and as midnight with the Church; the certainty and fixedness of its course amidst all the feelings of the earth; its suitableness to answer all can most disquiet any of the Saints, and let them see how clear and straight the way of the Lord is, amidst the greatest confusions of the time, yea how visibly his *Faithfulness* is commensurate to the whole work of providence in the earth.

For the Intent and Design of this short Treatise, the Reader can most fitly judge in his perusal; but this, with some serious aim hath been proposed, to appear in behalf of the glorious *Faithfulness* of God in his Word, by witnessing thereto, in an age when this was never more directly impugned, and all possible artifice on foot to cast reproach thereon; and for being a help to the Christians joy, to shew what this day is under his reach, and near even at his hand, for attaining more clear and solid impressions of the truth, and certainty of the Scripture, than most seem to look after; since it is too obvious, what hesitation and dark apprehensions most have about spiritual truths, in not knowing the great reality which is there, and how no science can have such firm and clear demonstrations; in pursuance of this scope some few things peculiarly intended here, I shall premise:

i. To witness how great and marvelous things are in our sight, and have a real being

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before us ; that none can deny to be an undoubted product of the Scripture , and there only could have been made known ; in which a divine power eminently exerted, and above all possible reach of natural causes, may be as clearly seen, as in the most extraordinary miracles that ever the Church knew ; and how confirming a seal that is greater than these to the truth is still continued before us.

2. It is not to assert , or give some naked discovery of these great supernatural truths in the Word, but to lead into the *things* themselves, in their real being and existence that this is intended, as truths to which there is a more near approach by seeing, taste, and as it were by some touch, than seems by most to be understood, how near and feeling a converse is to be reached betwixt the intellect and the object ; yea thus what great improvements might be made of sense in its subserviency to our faith, and a more full repose and quiet of the Soul for adventuring on the Word ; so as the way of believing, which to many is so dark and strange a thing, should be in that manner comfortable and clear , with as quieting security as we could have in the way of sense and feeling ; the clearing of which in this following essay, in nothing will be found to jostle with that great duty of walking by faith, and to believe against hope and visible appearances of the event, but as a singular help thereto.

3. Its intent is to shew, how by no chance or possible casualty, the truth of such great events of the Word , and certainty of its verification in these can be called in question ; but as to, the Church in the great providences of the time, so to

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to a Christian in his private case, is it most demonstrable, how every step in experience, and in the way of sense is by line and rule with as sure and infallible a connexion betwixt this and the written Word, as there can be in nature betwixt the cause and the effect, the head-spring and the stream.

4. To clear also the way of the Lord, and certainty of his truth in this very dark hour, when his work about the reformed Church so remarkably appears to be a work of judgment; for considering of which, some astonishing providences of this time did give a serious rise.

5. Here is some aim to hold forth clear and solid grounds from the Scripture, with respect to the sad appearances now of future things, and too anxiously disquieting presages many have thereof; which (whilst the earth seems to be at rest, and as buried for the most part in a deep sleep) are ready to faint and overwhelm the spirits of some; not considering what great assurances from the Lord are in the Word given, for a more comfortable prospect of future events, than it seems we allow our selves, and how well it is suited to answer such very sadning queries; what will become of the Churches? of the Truth? of the posterity? when the enemy is *sowing tares*; the storm groweth; a dead palsie we are fallen into, yea whilst every man seems to be *with his hand on his loins*, *alas for that day is great, it is the time of Jacobs trouble, but he shall be delivered out of the same*, *Jer. 30. 7.*

6. I shall add no more, but that with some special tendency this following discourse may

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be seen to witness, how it is no grasping at a shadow to be a Christian, and no such realities as these they find, in a time when the professed principles and work of some is to make void the very being and truth of serious practical Religion.

For what reflections I may be obnoxious to, in adventuring yet more on so great a subject, I shall say little; but if any fruit and solid advantage be found in its perusal, I might then hope there should need few words of apology; some essays at duty may have these discouragements and difficulties to wrestle with, that if there be not a doing for the Lord, it were a sad part to act. These few things I have here confidence to premise, for which I stand at a higher bar than the judgment of men; 1. That in this following discourse, I have sought *truth*, and not to follow the chase of airy and naked notions, as having some pressure on my own spirit, that these could not answer to! It is a great thing to believe the being of God, and that nothing fails of his Word; I must say, were these truly believed, it might be strange a Christians life were not more in a continued wonder, and with some greater transports of joy. 2. I have ground to say, That no fear from these times hath oft pressed me with more anxiety, than of these sad consequences, such shaking things as have of late occurred, with the abounding of offences, were like to have, by a too visible tendency to turn many off all persuasion of the truth; which was one special incitement to some further prosecution of what I had begun on this subject; though I must confess

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confess with such wrestlings on my own spirit, to trouble the world more by any such appearance, that if something from the Lord very immediately had not been to determine and clear, it was some service he would not reject, I should have needed no apology for such a thing, but laid it aside. I hope the Reader may not find cause to quarrel with an unnecessary multiplying of words, or that his time is encroached upon that way, so far as the expressing the matter with some plainness could admit; nor from any coincidence of purposes, with what was held forth in the *first part*; though the subject and scope be much one; I confess, in handling of both, the frequent changes of my health, the untroddenness of this path, the weight and concernment of the truths, with some study (if I may say without mistake) to believe what I wrote, and not easily to admit things, or take on trust, without a clear and quieting persuasion thereof, was not without some peculiar difficulty, beyond what might have been in greater enlargements on another subject. This favour I crave from the Reader, in his perusal either of this or the former part, to take a serious look of the whole, before he pass his judgment on a part, things there being so connected together in their tendency to answer the scope.

No time did ever more pressingly call for establishment in the truth than this our lot is fallen in; and to be solidly founded on such a ground, that can bear up though all other props should be shaken. The faith and patience of the Saints hath had a sore conflict, and the darkest part

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may be yet to go over ; but 'tis well it cannot be such as to out-go that light and comfort which is in the Scripture ; *Unless thy law had been my delight, I had perished in my affliction, Psal. 119. 32.* Were it known what it is to have these so near, how easie should it be to reason with what seems most peculiarly to influence the heaviness and trouble of many this day. 1. From the pressure of affliction and multiplied temptations, which with some now may be so sore, as the waters are ready to enter into their soul, and put them to question their principles ; but thus is the Lords way with his people known, when he brings them into straits, to give them a greater light than before ; as *Luther* after sore wrestlings said, *statim apparuit mibi nova facies Scripturæ* ; the afflicted have their peculiar comforts, much beyond others ; and know what is to bear up the heart, that it is stronger than it self. 2. Such is the tribulation of these times as may seem more imbittering to some, from the different lot they see of others ; how many stretch themselves on their couches, that chant to the sound of the Viol, and drink wine in bowls, but they are not grieved for the afflictions of *Joseph*, *Amos 6. 4, 5, 6.* Few seem to know the heart of the afflicted, or are found to act the *Samaritans* part ; and how rare are these who search out the cause of the poor, whom men regard not ; and oft have no witness to their griefs but one, but is indeed one for all, *Thou God seest me, Gen. 16. 13.* It is in the Bible the cause of the oppressed will find patrociny, when no-where else ; nor can that assurance fail, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy,

Job.

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Job. 16. 30. Every day hath this work, to put some part of the Christians griefs, and the most desirable enjoyments of others by, which can never possibly be reacted, nor return any more again,
3. Are not prejudices at holiness now such as might put Christians more on their guard for a solid sounding on the Scripture, yea when it is so clear truth suffers not at that rate, nor is the shaking of many, in such hazard, from what visible opposition is thereto, as by these more subtil conveyances of reproach; whilst a serious care to prevent this, or to advance the repute and credit of that excellent profession of holiness, seems to have but little weight upon us. *Truth* this day is as a broken and shipwrackt interest in the eyes of many, offences have come in as a flood upon the Church, whence a spirit of Atheism hath in a strange manner got up, and been upon the ascendant, but a recovery must be of all that is lost; when that *creating-word* from the Lord on the *dry bones* comes to bring them together, and put flesh and sinews thereon. There are three things seem this day to be a difficult part of a Christians work; though duties which had never a more peculiar season and call thereto, than now.

First, *By a manifestation of the truth, to commend our selves to every mans conscience, in the sight of God,* 2 Cor. 4. 2. So as in the worst of times holiness may appear, which with the greatest lustre and most advantage doth then commend its truth and certainty to others; nor can the time be such as this can want some dread and awe therewith, to draw

the following chapter
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draw forth a testimony from its greatest haters, when to enforce it the more, the world may see how well a close and fervent adherence to the truth, with a convincing prudence can evidently meet, so as to shew none are more men than such who are most Christians; yea how these upon higher inducements and principles than any outward interest, must be swayed in pursuance of their duty.

2. It may appear a very difficult service this day to stand in the gap when a breach is made; or how to come in the room of an Intercessor betwixt a highly provoked God, and a people in whose case so much cause is to dread the near approach of that sentence, *Zach. 11.9.* The duty is undeniable, to pursue a national reconciliation as well as personal, though but one were found to adventure thereon, *to lift up a prayer for the remnant that is left;* and put so sad a ruin under the great high Priests hand; yea such doth the Lord look after, when judgment is ready to go forth; *And I sought for a man that should make up the hedge and stand in the gap before me, that I should not destroy the land, but I found none,* *Ezek. 22.30.* This seems but little believed, how far he does subject even the Interests of a Nation to the prayers of his people; *Isa. 45.1.* yea what upon a peradventure hath been reached in the most hopeless essays, *Jon. 3.9.* but oh how sad when these who are most concerned to keep a land from sinking, it cannot bear.

3. It may be too obvious, how difficult a part of a Christians work this is, to walk aright towards others in a distempered time, when a spirit of jealousy

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Iousie seems to be poured out ; so little oneness of heart oft found, where there wants not oneness of principles ; and too visible an abounding of these evils the Apostle speaks of, as some part of the Churches ruin in that time, *envy, strife, railings, and evil surmisings*, 1 Tim. 6. 4. Two things may be instanced, which seem to give a peculiar rise thereto : one is, little personal freedom both Christians and Ministers have amongst themselves, whilst so sad a liberty is oft taken to speak at a distance to the prejudice of others ; yea when it cannot be hid, how many such things that have begot distance, jealousie, and bitterness of spirit, upon more clear and convincing trial are oft found a grapping with their own shadow ; thence gets Satan such advantage, and the prayers of the Church are obstructed more than is laid to heart. Some sins seem not once to come near, distress our conscience as a transgression of the rule. I confess, one of the difficult works of a Christian this is, that needs some especial touch of the great Healers hand, on the spirits of his people, to make easie, how to walk with that tenderness, prudence, and yet freedom of spirit, in duties we owe to others. But a second I must name, that gives too visible a rise to our ruin this day from our selves, more than from all our adversaries, the want of an *bumble* spirit, in so remarkably humbling a time ; what rare excellencies hath this oft spoiled ! and whether in a Nation or a man, it is that the holy God will contend with ; I am sure, if our sad distempers were followed more to the true rise, here it might be found. But I fear to have transgressed by so long a Preface.

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POSTSCRIPT.

Reader,

IT is like you may think strange, how these Two sheets in the close fall in as an Appendix, or what congruity there is with the foregoing Subject: But as nothing is more clear, than how Atheism with Popery are combined, and meet in one design and interest, To make void the Truth and Certainty of the Scripture; and that to secure the very being of Christianity, and our having a Bible given us from Heaven, and not from men to found our Faith on, is that where the most clear stating of the Question, and great Controversie betwixt the Romish and Reformed Church lies (as is touched a little in that last Section immediately preceding the Appendix); You may find also what evident and necessary rise was in clearing that amazing induration of the Romish Church held forth page 95. to give some view of their Doctrine and Principles, and in some few things pointed at there, I judged it more fitting, to set it down after this manner in the close; and that this method, by some few Questions and Answers, might be most for their edification to whom it is especially intended. For the shortness thereof, if any think strange, they may also judg some difficulty was more thus than in a greater enlarging; but it was for those who seem to improve little what may exceed such a bulk for their instruction, I mean such of younger years, and of the meanest capacity, with many

many else, whose indisposition to read, want of time, in too visible a throng of diversions, seems to shut them out from what is writ in books; But I hope its shortness is such as yet ye may find the Doctrine and Principles of Popery, and with what Arguments they pretend to be most strong, and make use in defence thereof; comprised with an obvious plainness in the Questions here proposed, and some clear view of their direct opposition to the Scripture, and reason, in the Answers thereto; so as in a very small time, these for whom it is most designed, may by reading it sometimes over, have it so far impressed on them, as to know how to answer and give some solid account of the Protestant Doctrine, and the grossness of Popery when assaulted by any Seducers. Nor I hope is there any ground to censure this as unnecessary, that learned and judicious Mr. Pools Dialogues have gone before for such an end, (which is a most choice and useful piece in this day), from what the Reader may discern is peculiarly designed here, and was I may say before I had seen the same. How sad is it, that so many professed Protestants now in this age, yea such as are serious in profession of the truth, know not more the solidity and clear founding of the Protestant Doctrine in its opposition to Popery, when the abounding of Atheism hath made such way for this as a flood to break in on the Church.

What mistakes may in some words be from the Press, I hope are such as the judicious Reader can discern without darkening the sense, and will pardon.



Lam. 3. 23.

Great is thy faithfulness.

C A P. I.

THE Prophet being taught of God, to endite a Lamentation for the Church under her Captivity, and to incite this almost crushed people to a duty suiting their present case, which was not to faint, or have their hands falling down on their loins, but that their eye might affect their heart with some feeling impression of such a stroke; hath a remarkable pause here, and sweatly draws his breath, in reflecting on the way of the Lord, what a mixture there was of mercy as well as of judgment in so deplorable a state,

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as is clear, ver. 21, *This I re-call to mind, therefore have I hope, &c.* And thus having once got under his sight some appearances (though small) of light and comfort, in so thick a darkness, he quits not that sent, until he have the faithfulness of God made as convincing to this people, in his compassion and tenderness, as in his severity.

Some things are observable here for clearing the Text, which in a few words I shall touch.

1. The time and condition of the *Jewish* Church, when so great a witness is thus given; it was under the *Babylonish* Captivity, even whilst the devastation of their land, the sad ruines of the City and Temple was before them; when Vision did fail the Prophets, the ways of *Zion* mourned, her people fell into the enemies hand, and there was none to help; to shew what may be laid in their way for strengthening, who are in earnest to essay it; and how a crushed and dead hope may have its very first quickning in the grave.

2. It is here we see a most rare conjecture betwixt the first and latter part of the verse; and how indissoluble a tye there is betwixt truth and mercy, which to divide

vide were no more possible, than to have a conception of day-light without the Sun; truth being the fountain-cause that brings mercy forth, and therefore *are they new every morning, because great is his faithfulness.*

3. We may see the peculiar intent of this Scripture, to hold forth the unspotted faithfulness of God in so sad a time; which is that Attribute amongst his glorious Excellencies, he hath chosen in a special manner for revealing himself to men, as eminently expressive of his Being, Veracity, and Power; the Rectitude and Immutability of his Nature; a truth, though we cannot comprehend (for the nearest approaches of reason here, will still leave us at an infinite distance), yet are we called to an humble enquiry, for our further joy and establishment in the Faith thereof.

4. The making out of this great Attribute must be understood with respect to the written word, and these express engagements exhibit there to the Church, where the holy God by a marvelous condescension, hath set bounds to himself, with a liberty for all flesh, to challenge if his truth there does in any thing fail; And thus

thus is it clear, how his works are done in faithfulness and truth; not only in an exact conformity to that eternal Idea thereof in the divine understanding, but to his revealed Councils in the Scripture, which is the adequate sign of his antient purpose and decrees in all that concern the Church, and the conduct of Providence within time.

5. The present advantage of so clear a testimony to the truth for that time, is observable to acquit the way of the Lord under these dark and shaking providences; and let men see with what an uninterrupted course his faithfulness doth still shine, whatever clouds interpose between them and it; yea how great a stability is in the worst of times for the Churches interest, and for all that a Christian can adventure on this blessed security, whilst every day gives so sad an account of humane props. Now from the Text thus cleared, I shall premise some few Doctrinal truths.

Doct. 1. They run not that errand in vain, whose work is to commend the way of the Lord in a dark time; for it shall commend it self to them; nor will they want strengthening remarks of his truth and

and tenderness, who hath a serious observing eye for them. Thus we find the Church was taken up in a fainting hour of trial, and what success it had. It is true, a Christians essays for this end, may sometimes be like that of *Elijah's* servant, to go once and again, yea to seven times and see nothing ; and the first breaking up of their hope, have so small an appearance as the hand-breadth of that Cloud had to him, though at last it made the heavens black therewith, and the return as large as its delay seemed long ; but whatever thus from the Lord is for trial, it is sure the faithful improving of a little this way, must still lead into a growing strength, and a serious aim to keep up the credit of the truth both on their own heart and with others, can leave none behind. Oh what rare mercies lye oft hid under some dark and afflicting providences, even whilst they are at our hand, and are not seen, from the frowardness of an imbibited spirit, that will not let its own eyes see the advantage of such a case ; but as if they did well to be angry against God, will quarrel more his crossing their humour, than observe his tenderness for promoting their

real good, and cry against him, because he will not undo them.

Dact. 2. They are on a choice sent, for their solid strengthening in the truth, let the times be never so shaking, whose work is to keep sight and follow with their eye the faithfulness of God in the providences of their life; yea does so follow this in their mercies, as that which is to them the better part of such a mercy, when it brings something confirming with it to the truth, and for their establishment that way. Thus was the Church here at work in a sad time, and through the whole Scripture is remarkable; did Jacob divide these in his observing, *Gen. 32. 10,* *I am not worthy of the least of thy mercies, and of the faithfulness thou hast shewed to thy servant;* or in his pleading with God, *v. 12,* *And thou saidst, I will surely do the good.* And how concerned was David, to have them still kept together in his view, mercy and truth, as in *Psal. 25. 10.* *52. 8.* *89. 1, 2.* But oh it seems such in these times have had some other sight and conception of this duty than is now understood; and thus have sought a more near intercourse with the truth and certainty of

of the Lords being God, with which in the very notion thereof, our converse this day seems to be rare.

Doct. 3. What-ever essays men have to darken the *faithfulness* of God in his word, yet is it such as must be shewed forth, and every time pay in some tribute thereto; therefore is so remarkable a cry here, to awake mens spirits for observing this, *Great is his faithfulness*. It is his praise and declarative glory in the earth, the ultimate end of his works, that point where all the lines of providence at last do meet, and therefore cannot want an Herald, though the stones of the ground should arise to speak it forth; for a greater necessity is here, than for the fire to burn, or the sparks to flye upward, that the glory of the only true God, in the verification of his word be from one generation to another witnessed. So excellent an use is this, that a Christian should think he lives, and hath such a desirable being, that in his day he may put to this seal, that *God is true*; nor needs any fear whatever time or capacity they are in, that it's in earnest they level at such a mark and miss it. O what pleasure is thus found, which the voluptuous man

never knew ; and how far is it above all he can have, or so much as apprehend in his wallowing in sensuality.

I suppose a Christian at such a strait, that he could but speak four words to the world, and be struck dumb through the rest of his time ; and that upon this account he were pained, how to speak them to most advantage, could he ease his Soul more, or have a choice beyond this for giving glory to God, when he might say so little then here, *Great is his faithfulness.*

Dock.4. That it is not a flourishing state of the Church only, and her rising, but her ruin also does convincingly shew forth this. From this Scripture may be clear ; yea is the voice of the rod as well as of the word, where both mercy and judgment meet in the same witness ; and though the bitterness of sin, and that sad eclipse it causeth betwixt God and the Soul, is sad indeed, yet is it such as may be no less for a Christians confirming in the truth than the joy of his presence. If dark and afflicting times were not, how much of the Bible were as lost, and its use wholly frustrate ? we stand amazed at some terrible

rible acts of the Lord in the earth; but consider not whose errand they go, and for what end, that it is to let men see, *when he turns a defenced City into a ruinous heap, his Councils of old are faithfulness and truth, Isa. 25. 1, 2.* which if they will not see in the word, read it they must, though it should be in characters of blood.

Docr. 5. It is a begun Cure to the Church, and so far a day-break under the darkest trial, as there is a clearing of the way of the Lord, that in faithfulness and truth he hath done it. Thus in so dismal time, when *Judah* was a wilderness, and *Jerusalem* a desolation, and their ruines such, as if destruction needed not to arise the second time; we may see how this was as the turning the light side of their trouble towards them; when once they knew where they were, and how all that was gone over their head did confirm his unspotted faithfulness; for thus they may be further perswaded of the Lords being God, and how he gives his word a being in the most amazing acts of judgment; they see his glory shine forth here, and that great end secured, wherein they are
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to rejoice what-ever miscarrying be of other inferior ends; thus however the storm blow, and though the earth should all be in a combustion, this greatest interest is sure, which is the faithfulness of God, they know it stands unmovable, and no loss or shipwrack there, on which more than all that is within time they have in dependance; yea, here the credit of the truth is cleared, the darkness of the trial is so far gone, and the Church brought to the light, to see both the cause and cure of her stroke, and needs not grope to find the door for an out-gate.

Doct. 6. There is a season and advantage duty hath, that gives a peculiar beauty thereto; which the Prophet does here notice, and thus is prefled to own the *faithfulness of God*, when the faith of many was ready to be shaken with the strange providences of that time. They are indeed blessed, who sow besides all waters, and find their work wherever it is laid to their hand; and it is sure, where love gets the command over the heart, those cannot want an advantage for their masters service; nor can they lose such a talent, but by laying it use aside; yet

yet sad experience can also shew, how difficult the work of the present day does oft prove to the next, and that the season of duty, and for some service to the truth, may be such a tide, as will not flow twice in one life.

Doc. 7. It is not a truth only, what these words do assert; but there is an infinite greatness applicable to it above all created things; the discovery whereof did cause so astonishing a transport here, *Great is his faithfulness*; a truth which none can over-speak, yea where no possible hyperbole could ever be; and as no age of the Church hath wanted cause for such a witness, I must say, none stands more debtor to this than the present time. This is the theme and subject to be followed forth here, which under the fence of peculiar engagements thereto, and some impression of the Majesty of God, whose declarative Glory in the earth is so much concerned therein, and so visibly impugned this day by many of the generation, I desire to adventure on, and to offer humbly some further light to what I have elsewhere essayed on so great a subject; and in the first place some clear demonstrative grounds

grounds of that infinite Greatness, to which no Angels nor men may or can lay claim; I shall but in a few words instance.

First, How *great* is it, where such assurances are given to the Church, that the Lord must cease to be God, and those visible heavens and earth cease to have a being, before his faithfulness in one jot of the written word fail. This is that ground the Christians' faith hath in the darkest day to cast anchor on, and it is sure, is no bottoming on a dream, when it is such *wherein it is impossible for God to lye,* *Heb.6.18. Et cui non potest subesse falsum.* Contingency hath no dominion here, nor mans free will, whose rise and working is within time; but his word is that before which all flesh must keep silent, *my coun-cel shall stand, saith the Lord, and I will do all my pleasure;* to which all second causes, both in their operation and purpose are indissolubly linked.

2. Is it not *great* whereon such a weight does this day lean, which is no less than that burthen of the visible heavens and earth, with their continued order and course, the whole militant Church, the everlasting state and blessednes of the elect,

elect, and all their interests within time, which are on this great foundation rolled over and sure ; yea, it is here the personal weights and burthen of every one of the Saints, the up-rising of the afflicted and bowed down, the credit and support of many, whose alone security for their daily bread is the promise of God ; and their venture whose *believing in hope* is such oft, *that it is against hope*, and all visible appearances, which on this alone ground are ensured ; the least part whereof were enough to sink us, if that were not to bear all up,
Great is his faithfulness.

3. How infinitely *great* is this, in the import thereof ; which (I am sure) if understood, we could not in so ordinary way look upon the Scripture, when it is no less than an infallible assurance given from heaven to the Church, and here upon earth put on record for things of highest concernment ; wherein before Angels and men it is ensured by him who lives for ever and ever.

1. That whilst time is, the ordinances of heaven, shall continue as they are, there shall be Summer and Winter, Seed-time and Harvest ; and therefore even he who soweth the ground should sow it in hope.

2. That

2. That the world shall be no more deluged by rain, for which the written word is our alone security.

3. That as the Lord is God, his Church shall be continued in the earth, and a seed to serve him whilst the Sun and Moon endures.

4. That none of the Saints shall be *utterly cast down*, or by any temptation ruined, as to final Apostacy, *being kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, 1 Pet. 1. 5.*

5. That he on whom help is laid, *shall be satisfied with the travel of his soul; shall see his seed, and prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand, Isa. 53. 10.* Yea, no nullity or revocation shall for ever be of that blessed Indenture he hath made with his Church.

6. That he will make them what he hath required them to be; and his own promise shall be the spring of these qualifications annexed thereto.

7. That none can condemn, whom Jesus Christ hath justified, and to his alone righteousness hath fled for their refuge.

8. That they shall be for ever with God,

God, and received into glory, whom he guides by his *Counsel* here. Thus for all these great interests does his faithfulness stand good; and what yet remains to perfect the whole work of providence in the earth, the Christians conduct and support in his journey, their safe passage through death, yea the keeping of their dust in the grave, and a raising of the same body at the last day.

4. His faithfulness is *great*, in that continued course it hath had with the Church since the beginning of time to this day, and never lost ground, but is still the same, and with the same strength hath shined under all these assaults hath been for its darkening. It was at the first being of the Creation, that so great a light begun to dawn, *when the morning stars sung together, and the sons of God shouted for joy*. What a transport must this have been when these blessed triumphant spirits the Angels could in one moment see themselves brought out of pure nothing, into that ineffable light of seeing God, with so clear a discovery of his Name and Attributes. It is true, there is a gradual light and opening up of the truth, and some more signal periods of time, to which a brighter

brighter shining forth of the faithfulness of God hath its respect. There was a veil over the times of the Old Testament, and Scripture-truths then much sealed up, nor was the Lord so remarkably known by his Name *Jehova*, *Exod.* 3. 8, in giving a being to his promises. But now are come these blessed times of the New Testament, whose work is to open up what then was sealed, and bring forth such long desired truths to a visible performance; though this also hath a more peculiar respect to these last ages in which we now are fallen; and it is sure, were this once finished, and that the written word had done its work, for what concerns the Church within time, there should be no more to do, but the glorious faithfulness of God, which never yet ceased to shine (though with a gradual ascent) had gone its course, and were at the full and perfect day.

5. This also is great in the extent and these large bounds, where this day it shines forth, which is not in the visible Church only, or where the fame of the Gospel is spread, (though there alone it is believed and known), but goeth as far as the whole work and conduct of providence through the earth; for in no corner so remote or dark

dark, does this want a witness; it being clear, 1. That as far as the power of a natural Conscience is, and where men are constrained to observe a power higher than man, to difference betwixt good and evil, even there is its taking place displayed. 2. Where the Sun doth rise and go down, and the raging Sea hath its appointed bounds; for these do witness through the whole earth, that God, whose promise and appointment they are, and which no humane power could possibly effectuate, is *faithful and true*. 3. This must shine forth, and have the extent of its discovery in as large a bounds, as there is men; who cannot exert reason, and not see that marvelous order and dependence of things which is through the Creation: so that though they know not the word, yet is this truth of it in such great letters written out, as all may read, upon the heavens and the earth, *His work is perfect, and all his ways are judgment*, Dent. 32. 4. 4. What a visible witness hath this, in the greatest darkness and barbarity of the earth? yea upon such an account, that so great a part thereof lyeth as an out-field; without that pale and inclosure the Gospel hath made? for it is sure, here is an ob-

vious seal to the Scripture, as well as the being and flourishing of the Church.

5. Which is more marvelous, it is not in the dark places of the earth only, but in that place of horror and utter darkness, where this doth eminently shine forth; for it is there those unspeakable torments, with the continued cries of the damned in hell do never cease, nor never will, to bear such a witness, God is *faithful* and *true*; no possible atheism can be there, whose felt experience doth force them to know, that God is what his word declared him to be, in that unspotted attribute of his Justice. Yea, if a full history could be writ of this world, what in all times hath occurred both to Nations and particular persons, (if this were possible) what else would it be found, but as a great and exact history of the Bible, where the greatest Atheist might see these truths they read there writ in most visible realities before them, *Et quod mundus nihil aliud est, quam Deus explicatus secundum Scripturam?*

6. What cause hath the Church to witness, Great is the faithfulness of God, from its product, I mean those great and wonderful events of the Scripture, in which this day it hath a visible performance before

fore us ; such events, which all may see a power above nature, and the energy of natural causes could only bring forth ; yea, that these are not at a distance, but so near, as if our eyes be not shut, a seal to the truth, greater than miracles or any extraordinary signs that ever were given to the Church, might be found at our hand. This is a subject of great import, to confirm and most solidly fix the Saints in the faith of the word, in so shaking a time, which were it understood, no discovery within time could more help to make our joy full. Which before I touch in some particular instances, where its truth and certainty may be demonstrate, I shall first offer these few things to be previously considered for giving light thereto.

First, It is undeniably, and we are eye-witnesses thereto, that such events of the Scripture are, yea before the world brought forth, which can be clearly evinced to fall under no possibility of second causes ; and are not some rare contingencies apt to beget admiration amongst men, by reason of their ignorance, but such that do as evidently witness a divine and supernatural power, exerted therein, for bringing them

forth, as there is in raising the dead, dividing the Sea, or causing the Sun to stand still in its ordinary course.

2. It may be clearly evinced, These are such events, that no humane knowledg could have possibly foreseen, or from principles of reason have found the least ground to conjecture their falling out ; and are not natural verities, which from any imbred notions thereof in the Soul, could have ever had a rise in our thoughts, if by the written word so great a discovery had not come:

3. As a further witness to their truth, and that here can be no possible imposture or deceit , we see a most perfect Idea and comprehension of all these marvelous events in the Scripture , that are thus brought forth in our view, which as we read them there , so are they certainly found to take place, and the one not more visibly clear than the other.

4. Since the nearest objects do most excite and affect men, if they be of no less weight than these are transmitted at a distance ; this advantage hath the Church here, in these great and wonderful events of the Scripture, that it is not on others credit and testimony they are to admit such things,

things, but may come near and see with their eyes the truth thereof, yea how it is known as it were by sensible touch and feeling ; there is I confess an unanswerable attestation of the truth by extraordinary miracles, which with the first dawning of the Gospel were given to the Church yet we see (though such want not, beside Divine Authority, most clear demonstrative grounds of their certainty to reason) how little weight these are found to have to affect or convince the world, looking thereon at so great a distance of time ; so hard it is for men to be suitably stirred up with any thing that is not in our present sight.

5. Such are these wonderful events of the Scripture (here in some instances after touched) that all may see they are not a transient glance, which at some rare time only have been found to fall out ; but it can be demonstrated, the greatest miracles the Church ever knew, are yet in her sight, and have been continued under the New Testament, by that marvelous verification of the Word unto men ; though some of these which have respect to some special periods of time, are now more conspicuous, and evidently brought forth in

these last ages of the Church. O what a stroke is it on our reason, that the most immediate and visible appearances of God do not affect, or have that deep impression on the mind, if they be not extraordinary and new! Thus in the greatest things of Nature, how much is the world taken with a Monster, that doth little regard the bringing forth of a perfect Man, which is indeed more wonderful; we look with amazement on a Meteor, who with small respect can pass by those glorious bodies of the Sun, Moon, and Stars, (I confess, these rare glances of a divine extraordinary power calls aloud for mens grave and serious observing, and some other improvement, than by most use to be made thereof). But it is sure, the Church this day wants not miracles, which is not considered, that in no strange and extraordinary path these now are to be sought, but in that high and beaten road of the Scripture, and its accomplishment. And therefore is it, that these unusual appearances of God, which in the Churches infancy were suited to awake men to an advertence to the truth, and confirm the same, do this day cease, because the unsealing of the Scripture in the times of the New Testament, was to bring greater things

things forth before us for confirming the truth, which are to be found by our taking heed to this more sure word of prophesie that countervails all these. But thus he goes by on our right and left hand, yet men perceive not, and do not truly see or understand what they see.

6. Since it is sure, the event of things here in the world is that about which mens minds are most taken up ; and we see what pressing desire there is to know the transactions of the time, and what is falling out in the earth, though it be nothing of their personal concernments. Oh ! how strange is this, that the great events of the Scripture that are of such high import for a more full assurance of the Lords being God, the certainty of his truth, and of that unconceivable glory in heaven with him for ever; these go by us with almost no inquiry or regard. Here is indeed a matter of astonishment, how men read the Bible, do professedly own it, yet nothing pressed in their spirit to know if such marvelous things as are there, do really fall out in the event, whilst such are of nearest concernment, and offer themselves to every ones trial by experience, so that none needs take them on trust.

Having premised these things for giving some light to the present subject, I shall here sum up what in this following discourse is further intended in these four particulars : 1. These clear and undeniable instances we have now before us of such events of the written word, where the immediate appearance of God, and a power above natural causes in bringing them forth is so clearly witnessed, that we may see things no less great and wonderful at this day wait the Church to confirm the truth, than any extraordinary miracles that in former times were known. 2. The import of this demonstration, with that marvelous light which thence breaks up would be seriously considered, that lets us see, there are higher degrees of assurance and establishment about the certainty of the Scripture to be reached, than seems by most Christians to be understood; for which beside the clearest evidences of reason, such a demonstration is given to our sense of the truth, and these great advantages laid to our hand for believing, that might make our adventuring thereon as clear and comfortable a way, yea with that full security to satisfie the Soul, as the way of sense and feeling could do. 3. Whence it is, that Christians assurance

rance and solid confirmation about the truth is so little proportioned to the greatness of the seal and attestation thereof that is before us. Its objective evidence so large and marvelous a thing, while that subjective certainty within the Soul, which this calls for, is so little understood. 4. How excellent an use and improvement of this subject might be made, I intend here also to touch.

CAP. II.

FOR the first, It seems a strange inadvertence; how such events of the Scripture are brought forth to the world, and this day visible in our sight, yet in such an ordinary way looked on, yea as if we were more asleep than waking; when if men quit not the use of reason, they cannot but see these both in the discovery and bringing forth thereof are above humane reach; about which that great appeal *Elijah* made, *I King. 21, 22*, to an extraordinary answer from the Lord, when the people were halting betwixt two opinions, and he said, *the God that answers by fire, let*

let him be God, may be here made use of, I may say, to a greater decision, and witness for the certainty of his Word, that men would come and see, if he be not assuredly God, and this his undoubted truth and testimony, which hath so marvelous a birth and verification this day in our sight, that all the *Magicians* in the earth could never counterfeit; yea, more fully demonstrative of a divine supernatural power, than if we had so extraordinary a sign, as that which was then given *Elijah* from heaven before all the people.

Sect. I. First, There is this rare *frame* and *contrivance* of the Scripture, and what a fulness and perfection it hath, as it is the record it bears to it self. *Psal. 19. 7. & 119. 129.* in which its truth so discernible in the event, that if mens eyes be not shut, here may be a continued cause for wondering set before them; such, that amongst the greatest works of God under the Sun, and all created excellencies, there is none like this, nor can be until the written word give place to immediate vision. O what a real miracle is the Bible, for such is it in it self, in its whole frame and contexture; that though it had no attestation else

else by the works of God, it might be an unanswerable seal to its own truth. It is indeed strange, so great a light shines, and surrounds men with its brightness, and yet they are so little affected therewith ; that such a demonstration of the glorious God, and a work which all may see is above humane perfection, helps not more to cure the Atheism of the world ; who if they would but come near and consider this great wonder, might clearly see : 1. That here is nothing wanting which the Church now in the world hath need of, or could in an extraordinary way seek from heaven ; and yet is there nothing redundant or superfluous ; the whole race of the Saints, from the beginning to this day, could not have wished it another thing than it is, though a latitude had been given them, which so answers all times and ages of the Church, as if only framed for the present time. No Christian but this takes by the hand, and to all that is in their case is so suited, as if for them alone it were an immediate gift and message from heaven.

2. This doth enlighten the whole work of God, and keeps exactly foot with each foot-step of providence in the earth, which comprehends in its lap and bosome every event,

event, small and great, that in due season
is disclosed within time ; no deep of Satan
such, that it doth not discover, nor is there
a work of darkness hid from its light. The
Church never knew her hazard, but might
find it was there seen and foretold ; yea, the
eternal Counsels and Decrees of heaven,
and what is concluded there, which neither
Angels nor men could search into, are here
set open in our view ; and that greatest
depth of Election thus so far unvailed, and
brought down before our eyes, that men
can be no more sure such shall be saved,
who are predestinate to life, were there
access to read their names in that secret
roll of the Decree, than from the Scripture
it is sure such are elect, and shall undoubted-
ly be saved, who have come to Jesus Christ
in the acceptation of the offer of the Gos-
pel. ^{on} 3. Let us come near, to look to this
great wonder, that with such a light dis-
covers the whole Creation, and lets us
know, what such a sight and these mar-
velous things therein mean, which else should
be unintelligible, and as a dark mass be-
fore us ; this that draws by the vail,
and shews that rare image of spiritual
truth in these things that are obvious to
our senses ; and how the invisible things
of

of God, his eternal Power and Godhead, are by things seen shewed forth; for thus is the great fabrick of Nature disclosed in its original, its continued course, that indissoluble chain of second causes, and how high a rise it hath in their dependences, until they touch heaven, where all these links are fast tyed to his unchangeable purpose; yea, thus is it by the written word, that the Heavens and Earth as two great Volumes are spread forth, and made easie for men to read, so as without this blessed conduct, it is clear, no possible communion a Christian could have with himself, with the works of Creation, with the daily occurrences of providence, or one Christian with another. 4. Here men may see that marvelous contexture and series of truths, how none stands alone, but so linked with a mutual correspondence to give light one to another, that each has it peculiar room and use for answering the whole frame, and not one pin there wrong placed, but all every-where uniform, and like it self, amidst so great a variety of matter, and distance of times, most wonderfully joined and knit by one corner stone Jesus Christ, who is that blessed point in whom all its lines do meet, and as the Soul which enlivens

livens the whole body of the Scripture. And it is sure, on whatsoever part of Scripture a Minister preach, he does miss the greatest scope of that Text, if it lead not into the Gospel, and his Doctrine thence be not thus pointing with some clear tendency towards Jesus Christ. O what a sight is here, could it be truly understood what is before our eyes ! 5. Thus we see, it is framed (which the Former of all things could only do) to correspond with the inward man , and exercise an authority over the conscience, and our most retired thoughts as well as our actings, and how this and this alone hath brought to light that marvelous and unknown passage betwixt the Soul and an invisible world, to have in one moment so immediate a converse with heaven, and from it, and thus to make its continual resort there ; yea, lets us see the way for so near a converse with God, which we know by surest experience to be such as it is there revealed. 6. I must further add, what a peculiar weight and signification are the words of this great record found to have (I mean the Original) by which the holy Ghost hath chosen to convey the truth unto men, which no language, no humane skill can express

express to the full, or is able to give the sense of that marvelous ~~was~~; and life it, expression, and of these idiotisms there, but one age must still leave it to another for further enquiry and search.

Sect. 2. That great Scripture-truth we see in the event, and the certainty of its taking place, which could never have entered in mens thoughts, if thus it had not been made known, That there is a *spiritual* and *new Creation*, such a rare structure and workmanship, wherein the glory of God in his Attributes doth more eminently shine forth, than in the being and frame of these visible heavens and earth; here is indeed a great discovery, though these ordinary thoughts most have of it, may bring it in question, that either this is but a romance, and not really believed, or our reason must be in a strange sleep, who know so little the weight and import of such a truth. But question this who will, it is sure, such as ever knew the reality of Religion, can be of nothing more perswaded than they are here: 1. That such a truth they read in the Bible, and is expressly there shewed forth, which nature never taught the world, but to this day should have

have been a *terra incognita* without Scripture-light; see *Eph.* 1.19. 2.10. *Jam.* 1.18. *1 Pet.* 1. 23. Nor is it a dark view there given of such a thing, but a most perfect Idea and model of this workmanship to the least pin thereof, which is thus set forth before us. 2. That as it is written, and brought to light, so is it certainly found to be a truth. Here is no world in the Moon, or the visions of mens heads, but such a Creation do the Saints know, and hath been their witness'd, since such a seed was in the earth, upon as clear demonstrative grounds as men can have of this visible world they now are in; That the being and reality of grace and a spiritual life, these felt enjoyments of God, and his workings in the Soul, are truths by experience found, and do exactly answer the pattern thereof which was sent down from heaven, and exhibited to us in the Bible. These know there is a living holiness, which even to others may be as discernible as that there is a living man upon the earth; and a second impression which the Law hath on the heart, as we see it with Ink before us in the Scripture: I know, to such who have their Soul sunk in the earth, this may be as a night-dream.

But

But do men debate there is a truth in these discoveries of *America*, when now for some ages, by so many thousands who have been there, and have a continued trade with these parts, it is attested : Yet a greater witness to this truth and its undoubted certainty is here, from the whole race of the Saints, since the beginning of time to this day, whose record we know to be true, except we should deny there is a Sun when we see it with its own light.

3. It is sure, here is an immediate influence from heaven, and its continued necessity to conserve this blessed Creation, as discernible as that of the influence of the heavens on the earth ; nor can the parched ground more need the falling down of rain, than this is found to have of a new watering to cause it to spring.

4. Thus it is known, there is another air to breath in, than what is suited to our natural life ; and another Sun than that in the firmament, to convey both light and heat to the Soul ; yea, a being brought near , and laid under these warming beams; and indeed such a blessed aprication, as men can know in the most hot reflex of the Summers Sun ; and that here also are over-cloudings and dark

D hours,

hours, as discernible as it is sure that the earth hath her night & cloudy times. 5. This is such a Creation, where as obvious a contexture and consent there is in all its parts, as we may see in this great fabrick of Nature, yea such where no *vacuum* or empty discontinuity can possibility be found.

Sect. 3. We see it verified, and before us in the event, which natural understanding could never know or comprehend, if it were not reveal'd in the Scripture, That there is a *creating of the fruit of the lips*, Isa. 57. 19. Such a product and fruit of the Gospel by the ministry of men to be found, that is no less wonderful and demonstrative of an immediate divine power, than to create and give things a being by the word out of nothing. Here is indeed an astonishing thing, which if a truth, it is then sure we see with our eyes a seal to the Scripture that is beyond these miracles which in a more extraordinary way have been given to the Church. Is it a humane work? or could it possibly be the fruit of mens lips, that brings forth such realities and wonderful effects in the earth? Could moral swasion, or a sound of air and words (yea where no previous

vious matter to work on can be alledged) have that effect, which so visibly is above the reach of second causes? Now that this is a truth there is no demonstration in nature more evident ; That the fruit of mens lips by the ministry of the Gospel, is a Creation indeed, I offer these undeniable instances : 1. What a power must it be, that can turn the word preached into a real act, and resolve what is as a transient sound into such an undoubted reality of life and feeling ; yea, turns the Word sown by the ministry of men, into vital principles within the Soul. What a sight were it, to see some of the stones of the ground rise up at the speaking of some words in the visible appearance of men. Yet here certainly is something no less marvelous , were it understood. 2. To turn the Pagan world to be Christian, and there-with a throwing-down of their Temples, & abandoning that worship and profound veneration, which for so vast a space of time, the Nations once had to their gods ; yea, this by the word of the Gospel, without might or power ; Is it not truly such a thing as to bring a new world forth in our sight, and a Creation indeed ? It is true, many ages are past since

this was ; yet is it of such import, a revolution so famous and publick through the earth, and of that unanswerable evidence, that this day, as a new and continued wonder, it might be as still present in our sight. And can this possibly be forgot, what the known records of these times, which we have in our hands, continue to tell us ; how strange a face some ages ago there was upon the world, and what a change (for which humane reason could never find a cause) hath followed ; that so long a rooted Religion should be forced to disappear, and this by an unseen power with the Gospel, that did not strive, nor cry out. So as now, for many ages *Jupiter* is no more known, nor hath *Diana* her Temple or *Apollo* his Oracles ; but these found to be such gods as in *Elijah's* time who could neither help nor plead their own cause, whilst their friends contended for them, nor could they be once awakened to appear for their interests. O what a continued miracle is this, that no distance of time can bring in debate, or alledg a possible deceit or imposture therein ! 3. Is it not more than humane, and the visible product of an immediate power from heaven, that awe and authority with the preached

preached Gospel, which is found on these who hate it, not only to beget a feigned subjection, but in truth and effect some subjecting of their conscience ? for it is seen where no visible motive is, no hazard from without to influence such a thing, how many millions have such a force put on them by a power which themselves do not understand, to fear and regard that name, and thus pay homage to the Gospel, in whose Soul there is a real and inbred enmity thereto ? this is a marvelous thing, what an awe and dread is put on most of the Christian world, even upon their conscience, that would make them stand with an horror and trembling to abandon Christianity, in whom a real hatred to the truth and power thereof is so discernible. 4. It is an unanswerable evidence, this can be no humane work, but an immediate Creation of God, which is in bringing forth the *fruit of the lips* by the ministry of men ; that the greatest effects of the Gospel in the world, hath in all ages had this known remark therewith, to be more found by the doctrine of the Cross, and the plainness and simplicity of the truth, than by the wisdom of words, or the furthest persuasives of humane eloquence ; to witness,

that it is not art, or the excitement of mens words but there is an evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, an elivening air and sound, that is most discernible from the words of these who are puffed up. And thus is it evident, that the Kingdom of God is not in word, but power; and how the truth hath a self-evidencing light therewith, and that native lustre which no humane invention could ever reach; a Painter may represent the lively colours of a flower to admiration, but no art can give forth its fragrancy and vital scent.

Sect. 4. How great a discovery of the truth of the Scripture is this, which hath in all times been known by the Saints in the event, as certainly as they know they live and breath in the air, That *it is God who worketh all their works in them, Isa. 26. 12!* I confess, one of the depths of Religion is here, the world cannot reach, and these who pretend that freedom and command within their Soul, which hath no dependance on a supernatural influence and power, will not know; but sure and known it is, that I must say, if the evidence and certainty such have, who are Christi-

Christians indeed, could be witnessed to others, and their experience resolved in words, as they know it in truth, the world would be then forced to see a debate about this is as strange as theirs who would question, if there be a truth in motion, or if day-light be a dream and delusion, or not. The Soul is one of the rarest pieces of the whole Creation of God; and it is here as on a Stage and Theater, the greatest of his works are wrought, yea such that a Christian cannot but know to be his immediate working; which 1. He finds is so far above his own reach to bring forth, if he be not a great stranger to himself. 2. Such he finds by no moral arguments or the influence of outward means could possibly be effectuate; and how little, with the greatest abundance of these is oft to be found, of a power or effectual working thereby on the Soul? 3. These he can clearly see whose work they are, by bringing them to that test of the written word for their trial. 4. They are such works as are not seen at a distance, but lie so near, that a Christian can retire within himself, and there have so clear and unanswerable evidence of a Godhead and the truth of his word, that I must say,

were this great demonstration more pursued, of the Lords coming near to men in his immediate working on their Soul, with a deeper reflexion thereon, such a degree of assurance about the truth, might this way be reached, that even by most of serious Christians seems not to be supposed or sought after ; this is a price for wisdom in our hand, that few know how to improve.

Having premised these, I shall here offer in some Instances, how great a discovery the Saints thus have of the Lords being God, and the certainty of his Truth, by that they know and see of his immediate work within their Soul.

I. How oft he causeth a day-break of light and life, by a marvelous surprise to arise within, when nothing but darkness can be seen without, like a Sunshine at midnight, is a truth not more truly promised to the upright than it is found,
Psal. 112. 4.

2. His causing their peace to abound, when surrounded every-where with trouble and distress ; for whence could such a thing possibly be, if it were not from Heaven, to rejoice in tribulation, and find that which causeth them take pleasure in persecution,

cution, in necessities, and reproach for Christs sake? *Job.* 16. 2. 2 *Cor.* 2. 9. Yet this is known and experienced.

3. The restoring their Soul by a present and sensible relief, when it hath been ready to fail, and give over, as under a *Deliquium*; which was *Davids* witness, *Psal.* 23. 3. Is it not found that if not immediately from above, no other way it could have come?

4. How there is a sensible impowering of a Christian in the inward man to wrestle and follow hard after God, under sorest pressures from without, so that he knows the call to this in the Word, is not more discernible than his being caused to approach by a fclt. influence, and power on the Soul, *Psal.* 65. 4. how great a witness is thus to be had of the truth, and that surely the Lord is God?

5. Nothing can be more known than this is to the Saints, that surprising influence which is oft on their Faith to cause them hope on the Word, and have a satisfied resting thereon, without anxiety, which all their former Essays could not do; yea this, when no outward appearance hath given the least advantage, but their difficulties on that hand seemed more to

encrease ; must not this be immediate-
ly from Heaven, and above all natural
causes? see *Psal. 119. 49.* & *Psal. 142. 3.*
what an account is there given.

6. It is sure none of the Saints but may know whose work it is, that in one moment can enlarge their Soul, and put it a-going with an easie and unconstrained motion after their duty, who were before so sensibly clogged and fettered therein; and how marvelous a change *the blowing of such a gale hath caused*; where nothing from any outward cause could be found for it; *e're ever I was aware my Soul made me like the chariots of a willing people,* *Cant. 6. 12.*

7. It is no less discernible how the weight and pressure of their burden is oft remarkably taken off, which was before like to sink them, even when the burden lyeth as sore upon them from outward causes as ever, yea nothing to lighten it that way, but finds there is *a staying the rough wind, in the day of the East-wind,* *Isa. 27. 8.* and how in their near approach to him, such a perswasion he can beget in their Soul of a delivery which seemed most hopeless from any present appearance, that all anxiety, and disquiet

is then gone, and taken off their spirit.

8. Thus is he known to be God on the Souls of his people, who can subject the Will with its own consent, to follow the dictate of an enlightened understanding, and effectually determine it, which once no moral arguments or reason could do, so that the heart is as it were stollen and caught away, yet with a constraint, but such as hath a most discernible congruity betwixt that drawing power, and their greatest liberty, *Cahrt. I.4.*

Sect. 5. Here is a wonderful thing, and a *most convincing Seal to the truth, this day in our sight,* if our eyes were but awake to regard it, *that the natural man cannot see, or perceive the things of God,* *1Cor. 2. 14.* How such a darkness should be, That the most searching spirits, who in the depths & subtleties of nature exceed the ordinary reach of men, yet here are blind, though they know it not, and whilst they exercise their reason, and judgment, about the truths of the Gospel, where so great a light shines forth, yet are these hid from their eyes, and they verily shut out from the Bible, even while they read it, so as they cannot see
that

that which makes the simple wise. Oh what a thing should this be were it understood! and how clear and demonstrative an evidence is it of the truth, a darkness which doth no less confirm the Scripture of God, than that marvelous light which shines therein to others. It is strange how far men would go to see some extraordinary Miracle wrought, or such a place of the earth, in which the light did brightly shine, when at that present time, nothing but darkness were to be seen round about; but is not here something no less marvelous, and undoubtedly sure, which now is before us, if we could come near to see.

1. Though it were not shewed us in the written word, it is sure and undeniable such must be in the dark, let them pretend what they will, and do not really see nor understand, what in the Scripture is most plain, who can on these Rocks and Precipices so confidently run, which would cause an unexpressible fear and horror, if they had that sight thereof, which others have from the same truths, they seem to converse with.

2. That there is a reality in this strange darkness (though it is a dream to the world)

world) is sure, and known by Christian experience , not only at their first entry into a spiritual state, what a marvelous light then breaks up , which they never understood before, or had the least conception of ; but in their after-walk what a sight and discovery is to be had sometimes of a Scripture-truth, that if they would give all the world for it they cannot have at other times.

3. And is not this such a darkness, whence it is demonstratively clear, there must be a Supernatural evidence and discovery of the Scripture, which from the light of reason and nature do not in degree but in kind differ , as truly as the light of the Sun is from that of a candle.

4. Thus it is not the revealing of truths to us with the greatest objective perspicuity can enlighten, until once it be *revealed in us*. But though men have a natural faculty of understanding, and no want of light in the object, and *medium*, yet doth it shine in on such a darkness that comprehends it not, nor can receive and discern Spiritual things spiritually.

5. Here needs not only a faculty
and

and habitual illumination, but a present and actual irradiation of the mind therewith, and an immediate disposing of the Soul to go forth and receive the truth, as it is represented in its true luster and beauty.

6. Thus we may clearly see there is such a thing as a real evidence, and perception of divine truth, and a seeing it with our eyes, that others only see in a map; with which there is also a transforming the Soul into the very things there contained, and a changing it into the spirituality of the Word, which as it is there written forth unto us, we know, and are sure its record is true; and so is it found.

Sect. 6. It is an undoubted event of the Scripture where men *may see a witness to the truth, no less convincing, than of the most extraordinary Miracles, that a spiritual seed should be kept up in the earth,* which doth not fail or wear out, under all essays to ruin the same: But such an excellent *species* of Christians in its kind as visibly transmitted through all ages by a continued succession as that of Mankind. It is sure this was promised to

to the Church, *Isa.* 53. 10. *Psal.* 89.4,29: and to this present time is it not seen how marvelously it hath taken place; yea, what an extraordinary appearance of God is there if these were rightly understood? 1. That Humane race can boast of no longer continuance in the earth, than this blessed Seed can do; for with *Adams* Fall did Christianity first break up that to this day lives, yea without interruption hath been perpetuated, not in a shadow, but in truth and reality; and since that time did the Sun never shine in so dismal a day, when it could be said, there were men in the Earth, but no Christians, or that the Church did die without an heir and offspring. 2. How could this possibly be without an immediate povver from Heaven, vwhere a continued War hath been on foot these five thousand years and more to vwear such a seed out, vwhilst vve see vwhat length of time can do in the World; and that a War vwithout Cessation, vvere it but for one age, could not fail in an ordinary vway to depopulate, and vwear out the most flourishing Countries. 3. Such a War and enmity is this vwhich thus hath been kept up,
that

as is not against the Godly so much, as that Divine image they bear, and not Christians, but the truth of Christianity.

4. Which makes this vvonder the greater, vve see the party stated in the quarrel against such a seed, is not spiritual wickedness only, or the united concurrence of men, but the very nature of man now depraved, and not an enmity, that is transient or taken up, but doth as naturally descend from one race to another, with in-bred principles, as it is for men to eat, or sleep; so that it may be said humane race doth not more naturally move to the preserving its own kind, than to destroy this. 5. How far is this above nature, or the possibility of second causes, when it is so clear, not one of that continued race of the Saints, but must have a new life and being from heaven, else not at all; hath no humane progenitors, but is the immediate off-spring of God, and no womb to bring forth such a birth, but his eternal counsel and decree. One Christian cannot beget another, but it is as great and marvelous a work the bringing forth of the meanest of the Saints to have such a new state and being, as to make of a piece of red clay a living

living person. 6. Thus is there not a visible discovery of the being of God, and certainty of the word, when it is so evident, the continued flux of time, and its changes cannot abate the power and efficacy of divine truth; but with each following age is so convincingly shewed forth, as can witness the Gospel does not spend its strength through length of time, but is still, wherever it comes, as a new gift to the world, which hath the fulness of a blessing therewith, even when from other places, it wants not some fatal periods and judicial departure. 7. How great a wonder is here, if we could consider what dismal times have gone so oft over the Church, and that impetuous torrent of Error and Atheism which hath threatned no less than at once to swallow up all serious Religion amongst men; so that the continuing of such an interest this day in the earth, and that Christianity still lives, yea not in a shadow, but in truth, is truly no less marvelous than the preserving mankind in the Ark when all flesh perished, which by an immediate power from heaven was so visibly then secured; and such that we may fear a self-oblivion, and wearing out of humane race

will sooner take place, than the failing of this excellent *species.*

Sect. 7. It is sure, we see in the event, what the Scripture only could reveal, and all may know to be no natural verity, That such an union there is in one spiritual nature, and an oneness in kind among the Saints, as we know there is a certainty of the being of mankind, and that agreement which in the same nature men have with other ; a truth clearly held forth to us, 1 Cor. 12.11. Eph. 4.3. 2 Pet. 1.14. and its taking place so great a witness and demonstration of the word, that I must say, were this understood might be more convincing, than if every day were to bring forth some extraordinary miracles before us. But for further clearing, let us consider these two, 1. How it is sure, there is a reality in this, and that it may be as evidently seen as we read it in the Bible. 2. Of what great import this is, for a more full perswasion upon our Soul of the truth.

As to the first, They must shut their eyes (I mean such as know any thing of the power of religion) if they know not these undeniable evidences of its certainty : 1. That there is one spiritual taste and

and favour of the things of God, which every-where and in all times is known by the Saints, though it be not in the same vigor at every time, but from the prevalence of the flesh hath oft a sensible abatement and wearing out ; yet is a truth, by experience so witnessed, that to such who are Christians indeed, and partakers of a new nature, this may be called *proprium quarto modo.* 2. When in any vigor that nature exerts it self, is not such a sympathy also found with it, that all may see no outward interests or humane ties have had weight to influence the same ; but where grace doth remarkably shine in one, it will help to excite and draw it forth in another, with as real a sympathy as can be found on the nearest ties and union in nature. 3. Is there not a particular suiting of the same means every-where to such a nature, as praying, meditation, hearing of the word, &c. so as no change of climate, and no place in the earth so remote, where there is a real Christian, but these do as naturally answer thereto, as our daily bread can do to this body ? yea here also are the same opposites (which to the blessed nature are destructive) no less discernable. 4. And

are not the same effects and characteristic operations of such a nature through all ages known among the Saints? that as it is easie to discern a man by signs and marks peculiar to his kind from a beast, it is clear, there are also breathings after God, and soul-converse with him, that are as inseparably annexed to a real Christian; yea, but one center here where all the stirrings and beating of this spiritual life do as natively tend as the sparks fly upward.

5. It is clear, what-ever difference is in the way and manner of the conveyance of grace to a Christians Soul, yet there is but one spring and original of such a new nature; and how this is no moral suasion or any external cause, but is found to be an immediate power from heaven, by the revealed Gospel, which in all of that kind doth beget the same image and resemblance of the second *Adam*, as truly as that of the first is to be found in his off-spring.

6. Here also is a marvelous oneness in experience of the truth, to which none of the Saints through the earth can be a stranger; how quickening, strengthening, and refreshing influences are certainly let forth by the word in their serious following duty.

Now

Now as these are demonstratively clear, let us consider of how great weight and import such a truth is, if our thoughts could be more stayed thereon: 1. To witness the reality of Godliness, and that the being of a Christian is no more a shadow, than the being of a living man. 2. That this can be no transient disposition, which the times, the temperament of the body, or outward causes might influence; but the reality of a new creature, which riseth further above the nature of man, than it in its highest elevation is above the nature of beasts. 3. Thus we may see, whatever differences are amongst the truly godly, to which their corruption, darkness of mind, and contrariety of natural dispositions is oft found to give a sad rise, yet these can no way reach serious godliness a blow; it being clear such a new nature is, where they all meet with a marvelous oneness and correspond in the specifick properties of a Christian. 4. Thus they can know and discern their own kind, are mutually disclosed to other, by some near an intercourse of their souls, that if such a surprise were, for one Christian to find another in some remote part of the world, to whom the Lord in some

extraordinary way had revealed himself, and had never known what converse with any such was; O what a natural warming one to another, and feeling intercourse should there be found upon this mutual discovery, even as the meeting of two men in a land inhabited only by beasts would cause to see their own kind.

Sect. 8. How wonderful an event of the Scripture, which yet in all times is so certainly known, are these contrary effects the Gospel hath on men, when to some it is a *savour of death*, that is a *savour of life* unto others, 2 Cor. 2. 14, 15. Act. 28. 24. for it is sure no natural cause, nor the influence of outward instruments can in this strange thing be alledged, that men exercising reason, who have the same inbred fears and hopes of things eternal, and by nature alike passions with others, yea have Souls in the same capacity to be wrought on by moral inducements, should by the very same means be so differently influenced to such contrary effects, that whereat one stumbles, others are saved and strengthened; one made further dead, and become as a stone, by that means which begets tenderness and weeping in others; yea

yea one made to tremble, and his joints to shake at the word, while they who are below them in a natural courage are not at all moved, but wonders what should affright them by such a sound; Thus also is it, that some are made to hear a voice beyond words, *& sine strepitu syllabarum*, which is surely known upon his Soul to be his beloveds voice, while these who sit by can discern no such thing. O what is this? which if it were known aright, I must say is as visible and immediate an appearance of God, as the working of any miracle that ever was, when here men may convincingly see, 1. How it is not of him that willeth or runneth, but there is a divine breath and air that is from heaven immediately, while at the same time it goes by others unperceived. 2. That here none are masters of their own motion, nor can any previous disposition from nature be alledged to give the word of the Gospel an advantage upon some more than others; and it is sure no humane reason can find a cause for it from without, why such a mean at the very same time should beget love in some and hatred in others, that when to the world the opening up of divine truth is foolishness, others should be

then struck with amazement at so great a discovery of the wisdom of God there. 3. Is it not seen also, how surprising and unexpected this oft is found to be, that the more rude and stubborn in their nature are so remarkably oft influenced by the word, while on these who are more polished and refined, there is no such stirring. 4. And may it not be easie to see the truth of an innate quality; whence some feed and suck honey from the same mean out of which others draw forth poison; and though no perswasions of men can take off that inbred aversion to spiritual things, or change such an impoisoned nature, yet is there a divine power found to do this.

Sect. 9. It is a great event of the Scripture, where we may see the truth near, and a visible demonstration of God before our eyes in these spiritual gifts given under the new Testament to the Church, and for her use; which as it is expressly held forth to us, Psal. 68. 18. 1 Cor. 12. 14. so is its taking place clear and undeniable even before the world this day, with so immediate a witness from heaven to the truth and Ordinances of the Gospel, as might force a

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conviction on the greatest Atheists of the being of God, and certainty of his word. These are so manifest, 1. How such spiritual gifts are not simply acquired, but they are given ; which by no skill or means could be attained, if there were not an immediate convey from above, though this doth not justle with that command-ed use of means for their further improvement. 2. That these are such as men may see have no dependance or necessary connexion with gifts meerly natural ; but the most excellent endowments of nature, if alone, are found to be a poor shadow to serve the Church, and that they are not suited for such an end, though of singular use in their own place. 3. These are gifts that we see do not cease or wear out, where there is a divine mission, and wherever the Church is a building ; but when once there is a judicial time, upon some particular Church, it may be then easie to discern how both gifts and grace are a going, and a gradual departure both of light and heat. 4. And are they not such with which the world is forced to see a marvelous energy and power for their enlivening, yea something of a spiritual air and breath, and another sa-vour

vour and evidence, to witness these gifts are not only given, but the use and exercise thereof must have an immediate intercourse with heaven, and that surely there is something beyond words or the reach of all humane invention in bringing forth the truth, even a supernatural influence, that the most eminently spiritual minister hath not to dispose of at his pleasure; but I must say, the with-drawing of this sometimes may be as strengthening a remark, and of no less use to edifie the Church, than the most discernible enlargements at other times. 5. As a more visible accession of these gifts now to the Church in the times of the new Testament, is clear; it may be seen also, how a divine incitement is sometimes eminently shewed forth for their improvement and exercise; yea how these are then suited for the use and service of such a time, that its sure, no remarkable exigence of the Church did need a spiritual gift, but it was found, and some called forth, the hand of the Lord being strong upon them for such an end. It is indeed strange among other great evidences of the truth, that this should not be more convincing, and how most pass it with such ordinary thoughts,

that

that 1. Is so clear and demonstrative an evidence, that the Churches head does assuredly live, whom though we see not, yet cannot but see a real and effectual communication he hath with his body upon earth, as we are sure there is a Sun that shines in the firmament, when there is so sensible a diffusion of light, and heat from it. 2. Thus is there a visible witness from heaven to that marvelous erection of the Church here, with its peculiar offices and service, as it is a politick body, and that the authority and extract of a standing ministry under the Gospel is not only from above, but thence also are its continued furniture and endowments, by a very immediate intercourse. 3. Thus we may have a great discovery of the Lords being God. I have oft thought, a serious and faithful minister of Christ, who knows in following his work, what near converse with his Master, and a close immediate dependance on him is in the exercise of these gifts; hath a peculiar advantage, for some rare and singular confirmations of the truth upon his Soul, which are much hid from others; and though these who look on at a distance, cannot know such immediate approaches

proaches of the Lord, and marvelous impressions as these left on their Soul, when brought near to him, or what may be betwixt a serious humble Minister of Jesus Christ and his master ; yet is there not some glance of such a thing, and a waffe as it were of the glorious God doth go by to the discerning of others , as will force this conviction ; here must be something more than humane ; and that a near and real intercourse betwixt heaven and men upon earth is no empty shew.

Sect. 10. Is it not an undeniable event of the Scripture , when the immediate appearance of God , and of a power above nature can only be seen to bring it forth : *these more solemn times, and high-spring-tides of the power, and efficacy of the Word, which are found to accompany the preached Gospel,* as the breaking in of a flood, that hath a force therewith which nothing then can resist ; we know such a thing is clear from the Scripture, that so great and effectual a door is sometimes opened to the Church, 2 Cor. 2.12, 19. 1 Thes. 1.5. and it is sure this is known and witnessed to the world, not only with

with the first times of the Gospel, but in these last ages ; so as it may be seen, the Sun doth not more certainly return in the Spring and Summer to the Earth, than that such great Revolutions have their time also of falling in with the Church, such that all may see, 1. Must be an immediate Divine Power , that can shut the Churches womb, and open it, yea bring forth such a wonder before our eyes, as is Isa. 66. 7, 8. *that a Nation should be born at once, and for the Earth to bring forth in one day.* 2. Such times as clearly shew this is the very finger of God, by that swift dispatch , the work of the Gospel then hath when a few days or years are seen to bring in more to the Church , than sometimes hath been the product of an age ; what stupendious, and full draughts are in this day of the power of the Gospel; yea how instruments are then visibly acted forth above their ordinary reach. 3. Whose work this is, all may know, which is so clear to have no dependence on men, on their painfulness , or that advantage of the most excellent natural Endowments, but such a marvelous encrease is thus found to the Church, when it is so discernable at other times,

how

how the most choice and eminent instruments are oft put to cast out the Net with sore toyl, and labour, and catch nothing, the tyde being once spent and gone, and it is clear from no appearances of nature or reason could this be inferred, to shew it is above the reach of all the Diviners in the world, where the Stars and their conjunction can have no influence. 4. Beside the real effects then of the Gospel may it not be easie to see an unusual brightness and heat go forth with such times, these glances of a Divine Power and Majesty with the Ordinances, as causeth amazement; and how then the Truth gets such acceptance, that Ministers will be in more hazard from the over-stretching of their Hearers love and respect, than from contempt. 5. To witness here is a work visibly above nature, and the power of second causes, is not the opening of such an effectual door, and greatest opposition from men, most usually found to meet; and how such a marvelous income by the Gospel, when least of outward incitements are to be a bate. But a time of many falling off, and stumbling at the trouble and reproach which attend the truth, is oft seen to be the time of bringing

ing others forward, yea with that strong affection and desire, which nothing but the sight of an invisible God, and an immediate power on the Soul could do; this is no Romance or fiction, but is a seal, and witness from Heaven to the truth, such as the world cannot deny, that it must be his work, and his alone, who is able to subdue all *things to himself, when he thus doth rend the Heavens and come down,* to make the Mountains flow down at his presence.

Sect. II. Could we see or regard, what is before us, here is a visible discovery of God, and of the certainty of his truth in his making out that promise; Mat. 12. 12. & 25. 29. *that unto every one who hath it shall be given;* how a remuneration and increase doth indeed follow the Christians work, and a vigorous activity to improve his little, as is there written forth, yea such that may be clearly seen, is above all that mens endeavour and diligence in an ordinary way could have promised, but must be immediately from Heaven, and as the undoubted effect of the promise. Now some

some few convincing remarks of this truth, which hath been clearly witnessed through all times of the Church, I shall here offer. 1. How surprising an issue most hopeless essays at duty with sorest wrestlings oft have had to the Christians advantage, yea even to admiration, when they cannot but see, how great difficulties were made the way to lead into their greatest mercies, and that *better is the end of a thing than the beginning.* 2. That marvelous outcome the improvement of a little strength for the Church and service of their Generation is oft found to have, which though it doth not appear for many days, yet such is it seen to be in the close, that in no ordinary way, or from visible appearances could have been expected. 3. How the seed was never lost, which was sown to the Spirit, but in due time hath returned bringing the sheaves with it, and that these do not lose their work, but it is found still to abide with an inexpressible comfort and joy thence where there is a doing for God, and a single intending him in it. 4. That to abound in the work of the Lord, was never in vain, but in all times hath such an increase as makes the difference betwixt them in the

the reaping, and those who sowed sparingly most discernible. 5. That no lot or trial of a Christian was ever so sad, but such an improvement is to be made thereof, to make it a help to their joy; and let them see no providence can come in their way, but brings their mercy and up-making with it, if the work and duty whereat it points lye not behind. 6. Thus is it found also how the unseen work of the Saints in secret prayer, and doing for the Lord without the witness of men, wants not an open reward, and that a hid growth to the root, and under the ground shall be so far seen, that their profiting may appear to all men. 7. There is a giving which visibly tends to enrich the giver; *and such liberal devices, by which men are found to stand with a greater income even to the discerning of the world, than all the excessive care and griping of others hath reaped.* 8. Is it not clearly seen, how the drawing forth of the Soul to feed the Church, by such as are called thereto, is the way to make themselves fat; and in watering others, these also are watered. 9. How such as have chosen affliction rather than sin, in that day have found it given them to suffer with so present an

income of strength, as hath made it not to their own astonishment only, but of others also, easie and sweet ; the appearance whereof at a distance was ready to faint them; yea thus it may be truly said, that something in the faith of the Martyrs for the truth hath been oft no less wonderful than in the faith of Miracles.^{10.} It is known, how strengthening remarks and confirmations from the Lord of his truth, waits such that seek them, and a serious reaching at lesser things for this end hath greater added ; and that mercies then want not something confirming to their faith therewith , where it is looked after as the better part of their mercy. But to what a Volume should known instances of this truth amount ; these few things are here only touched , to witness how great a discovery of God , and of his immediate appearance in bringing forth so marvelous a Promise is before our eyes, that we may see no connexion in nature is more sure and indissoluble, than that which is betwixt the Christians work and his encrease; and amidst these strange uncertainties and disappointments which are this day, how this doth not fail, that the fruit of righteousness is still peace, and he who soweth may

may sow in hope; yea, such a seen blessing is there on the lowest size and measure of the labouring Christian, according to the promise, as to make their little grow, and bring up the last to be first.

Sect. 12. What the Scripture only could shew, is it not a truth may be convincingly seen in the event, that even here there is *an immediate falling into the hand of the living God, Heb. 10. 31:* And such strokes shewed forth on men, which are evident to be above mans strength to inflict, or his capacity to comprehend, if they were not fore-told in the word. It is sure, such a seal the truth hath this day, and that these acts of divine judgment are seen to occur; for which no humane knowledg by second causes could find either the cause or the cure, but do with the very first view present the awful appearance of God, and constrains the conscience to acknowledg his immediate hand, & how these can be no causal adventure, but are a visible out-making of the Scripture. Some particular instances I shall here offer, which the world cannot bring under debate, they are so known and clear a witness to this truth.

First, As there is a great diversity of

influence and operation the Lord hath on the spirits of men ; this may be a marvelous evidence thereof ; A *stroke of infatuation* from his hand on mens counsel and judgment, where no visible cause or previous defect of this could be alledged , but is such that all may see is immediately from the Lord in verifying of this truth. Thus how strange a faint and amazement at ordinary difficulties , a fatal precipitance in their motion without regard to circumstances , the season and opportunity of things is then witnessed, so as in the noon day they cannot understand their way, but made to grope as in the darkest night. I am sure the world can be no stranger to such a sight, nor to these remarks of an immediate divine hand therein, if they would but open their eyes. 1. That here cannot be some strange accident in nature, when it is so clear an out-making of the Scripture, and the very same wonder repeated which *Esay* speaks of ch. 24. 14, when *the wisdom of the wise should fail, and the counsel of the prudent be hid.* 2. Is such a stroke, where a remarkable taking away that staff on which they seemed most to lean may be then seen, that no flesh should glory in his presence. 3. A stroke that

all

all must confess is above the influence or conjunction of the stars, and no product of natural causes, when not a person only, but a people this is seen to reach, and not the vile, but the honourable and ancient, to shew it is from the Lord of hosts, *that the Princes of Zoan are fools, and her wise Counsellors brutish,* saith *Isaiah, ch. 22.* And there also is the reason given, why such can neither see nor prevent what is so evidently before them, *because he hath purposed it, and it must come to pass.*

4. This remark also may be clear, of such a stroke, how convincing'y it falls in with the time of a People or Nations judgment, and when some great change is drawing nigh. 5. And must not the world see a power here above them, who thus by an invisible hand can give a stroke which none is able to cure, and make a people work their own ruin more than all their adversaries; to shew, that judgment hath many arrows in its quiver, and no counsel or wisdom can be against the Lord.

2. Thus there is an immediate *falling into the hands of the living God* may be witnessed, when the scourge slays suddenly, and in a moment makes dispatch, *Job 9.* such as an extraordinary plague and contagion,

that brings quick desolation therewith; some amazing fires, which as a lightening turns a City into a ruinous heap; such also are these immediate strokes of a divine hand on particular persons, that admit no parley, but are done before ere they be once apprehended; these are indeed prodigies of judgment, though from no age they are hid, which without a bruitish stupidity may be clearly seen to be no common or casual occurrents, but a supernatural causality is there, and the immediate appearance of that God, in whose hand, as an adversary, it is a terrible thing to fall, whose power can reach a City or Nation, as well as a particular person.

3. To witness this truth, There is nothing more obvious than an immediate delivery of some unto Satan, and under his power for judgment, yea how visible so strange and amazing a stroke is to be from the Lord; when such are then seen,

 1. To blaspheme and rage against him, when his hand is upon them, *Rev. 16. 11.*
 2. That a mans eyes *should see his own destruction*, when yet he will not cease to oppose himself to such a divine power, even whilst he finds it pursuing him, *Isa. 26. 11.*
 3. This may be clearly known in that im-

immediate power of the Devil over some to enforce their own assassination ; for it is sure, such astonishing instances there are, where no *delirium* or want of reason could be alledged, and something more than a violent inticement within made here obvious, like an immediate delivering of such up to Satan as an Executioner ; and where, not only a violent hurrying and incitement thereto is then discernible, but so much may be seen from the strange way it is brought about, as shews an actual concurrence of the Devil, and his hand is visible at such a work. This is indeed one of the strange depths of the judgment of God, where men may see a Malefactor is not more evidently delivered over to the stroke of justice, and put in the executioners hand, than some thus are given over to Satan to act such a part upon them. *Achitophel* and *Judas* whose judgment was immediately from heaven, wanted not a Burrier from hell to execute that sentence ; I know the choicest of the Saints may be thus assaulted, for whom preventing grace hath oft marvelously appeared ; yea, that some have been actually carried the length of such an horrid self-assassination under a natural distemper, of whom

otherwise we should be very tender to judg. This only in such stupendious instances is to shew how near and visible an approach of God oft is in some strokes of his hand, and that *there is a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity*, Job 31. 3.

4. Thus is there an immediate appearance of God, and his hand convincingly witnessed in the *delivering up even some of the Saints unto Satan for trial*; which not only may be seen in their outward state by a strange unusual appointment of imbittering things, that then are at once found to meet to make a cross sharp, like a reacting of Job's case in some degree, and of that method the Devil used in that assault; but which is more strange and most discernible, what is found on the Soul by these horrid injections, and impetuous incitements within to blaspheme, and to have thoughts here that are *horribilia de Deo, & terribilia de fide*; where it may be judged some of these motions, that the damned in hell continually have do there offer to infect the Christians Soul; what an assault this might have been in that messenger of Satan *Paul* had to buffet him, the Scripture does not particularly witness: but it

is clear, Job was no stranger to these invenomed arrows, and some approach that way no less to his Soul and the inward man, than his body was sore and pained. Now in setting down this instance, I only intend to shew how such a strange trial by an extraordinary power and influence of the Devil there is, and certainly known to the Saints, that may witness, how easie it is for the Lord to raise a storm within, amidst the greatest peace and calm without, such as all the world cannot make still; and how sore an immediate touch of his hand on the Soul and Conscience is as well as the body, yea how then it may be clearly seen to be something above natural causes. 1. In that horror and consternation is therewith, to which no pain or torment in the flesh can be compared. 2. That it is no singular and rare instance, but in all times such an assault have many of the Saints had, though I know its supposed singularity makes it the more terrible to some. 3. That in the same way and method it is still remarkably shaped 4. Yea, where no defect of natural judgment and parts to influence such a thing can in the least be seen. 5. How visible a force this is from without, injecting that which can have no correspondence

dence with their corruption within, but is such, that even corrupt nature is affrighted at. 6. Such that discernibly takes advantage and gains ground by fear, and flying before it. 7. I shall add but this, as these have their lucid intervals, in this case it is known also, how prayer and serious wrestling with God by the Mediator hath been still its best cure, and found more effectual here than all Physicians, as being a wound from that hand which goes above all humane reach and skill.

Sect. 13. One instance more I shall add, to what hath been held forth on this subject, how near an approach of that great truth is even here ; and a begun discovery in the event of the *state and condition of men beyond time*, that *there is a Heaven and a Hell after this life*, and death is not the last point to put a final period to a rational being. I confess this is one of the greatest objects of our faith, and whatever present thoughts we can now have thereof, yet such is that glorious estate above, and the horrour of Hell, as will be an unspeakable surprise to all who come there, and find that they never had a conception of before ; but it is sure also that even here more may be

be witnessed to mens senses, with that demonstrative evidence of the truth, both of the one and the other, yea in some degree begun upon the Earth, than most are aware of, or will let themselves know. It is strange how little this seems to be understood, and what distance we have in our thoughts, with the being, and reality of these great things, as if Heaven and Hell, were some abstract notions only, which lie hid in the Scripture, and consider not what near and sensible approaches of both are here.

As to the first, that glorious state of the Saints above, how marvelous a discovery is of this, and that begun enjoyment thereof even here; when a Christan so assuredly knows 1. in how large a measure the joy of his presence is let forth, the fulnes whereof is this day in Heaven, with these sensible embraces betwixt Jesus Christ and the Soul, which are found above all expression; and that this must certainly be some part of the pleasure above, which having no affinity with the flesh, bring in such serenity and calmness to the heart, and doth afford that solace and true delight which the whole Earth could not do. 2. As it is sure, there is a clear and sensible perception of Spir-

Spiritual Objects the Saints have in this life, which to men by nature are as far above their reach, as the things of another world; is not something also here to be known of that glorified eye the redeemed have above, by that near capacity the pure in heart are put in to see God; which is more than seems to be believed.

3. It is known and sure, how marvelous transforming that is by grace of the Soul, and in so far a removing its earthly quality, so as to make it even in this present state transparent, and pure in part, that the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ may shine in them. Yea thus what a discernible ripening there is and making such meet for that state above, by all these degrees of a Christians growth here, whereby they are changed from glory to glory, which really is some kind of a begun translation of the Saints to Heaven, as there is a coming further up to that full stature of the man in Christ. 4. We know there is a near and immediate converse with God here sensibly enjoyed, which no words can make others know what the Saints thus see and feel, as these near approaches to Heaven this way; but such a certainty is found thereof,

thereof, that no dying Christian but with some confidence can say though he change his place, yet will it not be a change of his company. 5. And is not something of this made also discernible to others, how such oft have come forth with their face as it were shining, and a visible appearance upon them of some near approach they have then had to the invisible God, and another World, that may shew where they have been, and that the cause must be certain, when the effects thereof are so real. 6. It is known what high degrees of a triumphant joy even here are reached by the Saints in following the Lord, and upon some special venture for him in doing or suffering, which is as it is then found upon their Soul to be a joy unspeakable, it may clearly show there is more of Heaven in real possession than most do believe, though these get not leave to dwell and have a settled abode in this hight, but must come down to swatter in the depths, and have their weeping hours over sins, and the prevalence of their own corruption. 7. Is it not both seen and felt in the Ordinances what a brightness sometimes is therewith on the Soul, and how piercing a sound may be audibly heard there

there beyond words, with that ineffably sweet and fragrant favour of his name, as oyntment poured forth, which to a Spiritual eye can bring such an evidence of the truth of a Heaven, as men can have of the being of the Sun, though under a cloud, by some rayes and beams breaking out thence, or by the first breakings up of the morning that it is sure there must be a greater light to follow. 8. Are not these times oft here with a Christian, when no cloud is betwixt Heaven and their Soul ; but such a clear sky and brightness of Gods face, with the sensible intimation of pardon, than which no audible voice from without could be more certainly heard, and then is the Conscience found to acquit when men were ready to condemn. 9. What does the strong actings of love and desire in the Soul of a Christian witness? is it not to shew that native tendency these have to their original, and how they have not forgot the way home, for it is sure that nothing which is come from above, can take up its rest here. 10. This cannot be possibly hid what marvelous transports of joy and delight have been oft witnessed by some of the Saints, in their most extream sufferings

ferings for the the truth , who had life and sense, and were flesh and blood as well as others ; that except men shut their eyes it might be easie to discern, these had got a sight which could look them out of trouble and pain, and cause them rejoice when there body was burning, and that it is sure more of an actual possession of heaven , and some foretaste of the glory there, is thus found under the saddest lot of a Christian, than was ever known, or conceived by such as are at a distance.

11. How discernible may this be , even to the astonishment of by-standers, that some of the Saints dying on their bed have got up then to the sight-hill of Heaven, so as all might perceive their Soul raised, when their body was most remarkably pulled down, and so far the vail drawn by, that it might be clear such with the opening of their prison-door, had a light beyond it, and saw that which no words could express. Oh if on-lookers knew or could conceive what by the eyes of some of the dying Saints is then seen, it would make them long more to follow on. But this I must say .it is a loss to the Church, that some of such great and extraordinary glances given from the Lord at these times, and

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convincingly then witnessed have not been more seriously regarded; now as a further witness to this I must add what the world cannot but know, how usual it is for sore wrestlings, and bitter complaints to go before such a bright Sun-shine to shew here can be no counterfeit.

I am the more pressed to touch this Subject, it is so strange, the deep impressions of a *Heaven*, and being for ever with God, are so rare now on mens Souls, when even upon the earth so sensible and near a correspondence might be had therewith. Oh is our life in such a continued throng, that there is no room, no time to be found with the hurry of other things, for Christians thus alone with themselves to be at work, and press on their own heart, not only these great and marvelous discoveries of that glory to come, which are so clear and express in the word, but what near and demonstrative evidences even to our senses may be found here of the certainty thereof, if some deep reflections were on these things. 1. What can be more as a Seal in our hand to quiet the Soul about these great assurances of heaven we have in the Scripture; than that continued witness before us of the certainty, and taking place

place of this blessed record, in all that concerns the Church or any of the Saints within time ? yea, how clear it is, nothing hath failed hitherto of its truth, in the strangest things thereof, which seemed most contradicting to sense and reason. 2. It is sure, none knows the truth of holiness, whose alone witness to this is from without, and such they can only read in the Bible ; but there is a *knowing within themselves*, and such a hid demonstration of the being and certainty of heaven to be found upon their Soul ; that though nothing is more clear, and really felt, yet can none possibly impart what it is to others ; nor could it be believed at a distance, or once enter into mens thoughts, what a sight some have here with these discoveries of the new name and white stone, even in the way of the word and promise, of that glorious state which is above. 3. What a sensible converse may these have with the truth and certainty of heaven, who know the real *being of spiritual things*? And as sure it is, the Soul hath its senses as well as the body, not only to discern, but really partake of these enjoyments and delights, that can have no rise, nor in the least be influenced

enced from any outward things ; so thus a peculiar sweetness and delight, and most sensible pleasure is there oft found in things most bitter and grievous to the flesh, as clearly shews that undoubted correspondence which is here with a higher state and invisible world, and how marvelous a suiting there is of these objects to a spiritual life and being ; since it is sure the fountain-cause and spring-head must be real, whence an unspeakable joy is oft in so immediate a way let forth on the Soul, when most separate and abstract from the body ; and nothing of an outward cause for it ; Is not this demonstrative of such a joy to be here found, and it's being no dream, which the Scripture calls *full of glory.* 4. Hath not each Christian to witness even to his senses, the truth of another world, and that blessed state above ; a known and real tendency of grace in the Soul to be still upward, after more near approaches to Jesus Christ, and a higher state than is here ; which with as native a motion is found as the fire can move up to its proper place ; yea, how sensible an interposition the flesh still causeth betwixt him and such glorious objects. So that Heaven and this

Earth

Earth he cannot but see to be as two opposite points, like the North and South Pole, as the one goes up, so far does the other go down; as the one comes in sight and account, so far is the other out of sight and estimation ; and thus an higher ascent of the Soul in more spirituality and abstractness from things seen, is as on leaving the shore, who the further he goes into the deep the land is less discerned. 4. It is sure such as know the truth of holiness cannot but see, what an advance each step of its further growth hath in a real assimilation and likeness to some higher state than is here; and that it is no shadow, but a drawing interest, and power, must be there , which can cause such strong emotions of love and desire to an unseen world ; yea, that the body is as a prison to the Soul, by its longings, and looking out to another place, whilst love hath taken so much of it already away,as can go, in this present condition,because mortality cannot enter immortality. 5. And is it not sure, and obvious to our senses,how real an intercourse and passage is here betwixt the Soul of a Christian and an invisible world, whither the continued haunts and resort of such do so much lye , where they drive

so blessed a Trade, and have most certain returns ? It was not strange, that Jacob's heart should fail, the thing was so far above his faith, of Joseph's being truly alive ; but when so visible a confirmation by the sight of the Chariots and Wagons was further given, though his wondering ceased not, yet did it cause his spirit revive.

Sect. 14. It is sure also, the world cannot but see *there is a Hell*, which lyeth not so hid in the threatnings of the word, but is in some degree both felt and visibly witnessed here, and so far a begun possession of its horror and torment, that the greatest Atheists may know it is a matter of earnest, and no night-dream, if they did not hide themselves from such a sight ; Now for this some undeniable evidences, even to mens sense, of its reality, I offer, in a time when by most of this generation it seems to be looked on as a disputable thing, and in so ordinary a way passed ; yea amongst the best these are so rare, who are found to work out their salvation with fear and trembling.

1. Is not this visible, and in some degree begun here in these everlasting stings and scorch-

scorching flames which are there, by that horror of conscience and insufferable torment known in the case of many, as that of *Spira, Latomus*, yea with most remarkable instances of this kind in every age, where the world might see the truth of a *hell* drawn as in a picture before their eyes, and how certainly this is begun not only in the pain of loss, but in the very pain of sense ; so as even here some of the scieches of the damned there, can be no hid or unknown thing to the world. 2. Is not hell and the truth of that horrid estate brought near mens eyes by these strange effects, which some begun degrees thereof could only cause, such as to blaspheme and rage against God , because of his plagues, a fury and violence against the truth beyond the ordinary rate of mens natural enmity thereto, with that impetuous pressure and incitement, which may be seen thereto ; yea, hath not *Cains* cry been heard from many, *my punishment is heavier than I can bear* ; such a sudden breaking up of the conscience, where nothing but stupidity was before, that hath made some seek to be rid of themselves ; as a desperate essay to be rid of this, and others plung themselves in sensuality to deaden

the sense of their pain and torment, by getting more near to the condition of beasts.

3. Can it be hid from the world, or the most ordinary observers, what is so frequently obvious, how there is a coming within sight of hell, by some here upon the near approach of death, that like the hand-writing on the wall to *Belsazar* causeth a terror and trembling sense on them, beyond what they could have from a present dissolution of nature.

4. Is there not something of that faith the fallen Angels have in hell, whose torment is to believe, and yet are constrained with terror thereto, visibly witnessed here? whereby many thus are haunted whether they will or no with the dread of God, who hate him, and their torment is from too great an evidence of the truth.

5. Can it be hid, how many of this generation, are so visibly transformed into the image of the Devil, and turned as it were into the same kind, with these desperate spirits, that humane nature, though corrupt, would even dread at some acts of wickedness, and opposition to God, these are found to take pleasure in.

6. And is not that association which is in hell with the Devil and his Angels actually begun here, in so immediate

diate a converse with them, and explicite engaging in their service, by many who for this end, renounce the very name and profession of being Christians, which the world cannot possibly deny? yea for this cause I may say even these horrid wretches serve, and are a most confirming sight before us to the truth, to let men know hell is no fable, when such are found in the earth, and dwell among us, whose continued trade and intercourse is with these powers of darkness. 7. It is known to be no dream or shadow, what frequent apparitions there are of the inhabitants of that place, these wicked spirits, and how much they haunt the world whose continued work is to incite men to wickedness, and oppose the Kingdom of Christ, that it is strange how little we are affected therewith, and should not thence have some deeper reflexion on the being and certainty of a hell. 8. So far is that after-state made visible here, by a delivering many up to such astonishing obduration of mind, that to the conviction of all, they may be seen bound over in the prison, and kept under chains, so as they cannot stir until death come to bring them to the rack; this is no rare sight in the world, yet such a

preludium of hell; and so near a step to it, that it may be clearly seen, such a sentence from the great judge, *depart from me*, is even here past, and made effectual, how they are put in the executioners hand, shut out from means of their help, the Scripture bound up and sealed, from having any more access to their Soul ; and thus no more to do, but to be carried from the Gaol to the final stroke. 9. There is a map and shadow of that eternal punishment the world may also see in some terrible acts of divine judgment within time, such as have been publickly known, and a visible hand from heaven therein on persecutors of the truth, apostates, blasphemers.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

SOME great events of the holy Scripture, are held forth in the preceeding chapter, to witness, what a Seal this day is in our sight, to the truth and faithfulness of God there; and hath in the darkest times of the Church been remarkably continued before her, which I am sure were they rightly looked on and brought near our thoughts, might be more demonstrative of God, and the exceeding greatness of his power, than any extraordinary signs or miracles could be. I shall but touch three instances further, with some peculiar respect to these last times; which as they are clear and undeniable before us; they convincingly witness also of what singular use some of the most dark, and astonishing depths of Providence about the Church in this present day are to confirm, and seal the Scripture.

Sect. I. First we see a stroke of judicial induration, and blindness of mind upon the Jews to this day continued, after so great a light, and brightness of the Gospel; and when all possible grounds, and

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props, they formerly leaned on are to their own conviction now made void, which is indeed one of the strange wonders under the *New-Testament* we have before us; but was not this foretold? and by the holy Ghost shewed to the Church, what we see, with the very first dawning of the Gospel. *Rom.* 11. 8. 12. 25. 2 *Cor.* 3. 14. And how such a mystery should be understood, yea, the long continuance of that stroke made so clear, as to make it a further confirmation of the truth, since it is sure that *blindness upon Israel* is concluded there, under a judicial arrest, until the *fulness of the Gentiles be come in*; now if this were not before us in the *Bible*, could we possibly know or comprehend such a thing, what so visible a withholding the very exercise of mens reason can mean, that they see not the light in the noon-day: But here is a darkness, for our further enlightening, and a stroke on them which might be of greatest use to strengthen us more in the truth, when that so strange a vail is still over their mind that they cannot see.

I. How the *Old-Testament* is the very foundation of Christianity, and that there
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the Gospel, ~~is~~ the greatest secret, which from the bosom of the Father was ever revealed to men: doth conspicuously shine forth; whose brightness now under the New-Testament, though it hath a greater light, yet is it no new light: for to him do Moses and the Prophets bear witness, so that you cannot cite a more clear testimony from any of the Evangelists to the *Messiahs* sufferings, and the Churches being redeemed that way than you may have, Isa. 53. Dan. 4. Jer. 23. 5, 6. Psal. 22. 18.

2. Can men have their eyes open, and not see, that the whole scheme, and ~~e-~~conomie of the Jewish service, is a most clear shadow, and Idea of the Gospel, and how that dark body of their ceremonies and Types, have thence only their light; for who could look on the Ark, the Mercy-seat, their Passover, Scape-goat, &c. and not discern some Divine mystery thus shadowed forth? That surely the blood of atonement, their sin-offerings, and sacrifices, were not the true victim offered to God, but had a figurative relation to some other propitiatory sacrifice on whom the sins of men were actually laid.

3. What

3. What possibly can be more clear than this? That in the Gospel as the center all these shadows did meet, which do now cease, their full end, and accomplishment being come; and if men look on that pattern, and frame of the Jewish service, can they see it, and not know the building it self by it? And how exact a correspondence is thus betwixt them, that in so strange a multiplication of these Figures, and Types, which were then of Divine appointment; nothing is there inept, or useless, but had a peculiar use, and relation to something in the Gospel; that as face answereth to face in the glass, one may see there is the shadow, and lo here the substance, where all is found, and that their light is now gone and extinguished, because the Sun it self is risen.

4. Men could hardly believe, if they did not see this with their eyes, with what veneration the Jews can admit the *Old Testament*, and yet deny the *Messiah* to be come. They know it is many ages past, since their fathers looked for him, and with greater expectations were awaked to such a hope, near these times of the Gospel than they now are. They know

know *Daniel's* Seventy weeks is a piece of canonical Scripture, which clearly takes in his coming, and though it were taken either for weeks of days, or of years, it must be long since expired, but if they should mean weeks of ages, then for many thousand years his coming could not be yet expected. How strange a veil must this be on their mind? which may be no less obvious, than that they cover themselves with, at the reading of the Law.

But what a witness is here also to the truth, to silence Atheism about the Divinity of the Scripture, if it were brought near our thoughts, that such a nation, and race there is, and kept up to this day as a living witness to let the World see.
 I. How unanswerable an evidence this is to their senses of the truth of that renowned Kingdom, and Church of *Israel*, to whom the Oracles of God were committed, and once by a special mark of his favour separated from the Nations, (though now it is turned into a curse) which to the conviction of all, even of the greatest Atheists, may shew it is no imposture, or Romance, which by the Scripture is held forth; but such a visible witness there
 yet

yet is of its truth, as men have of a flourishing City, when such ruines are seen, as bear the evident marks of its former grandeur. 2. We cannot but see such a people kept by themselves, and not mixed with the Nations, whose Fathers from one generation to another did own and imbrace the *Old Testament* as the word of God ; and which is demonstratively clear, could not therein be instructed by the Christian Church, whom with the greatest opposition and malice they have still pursued, to witness there is no possible collusion, can be here. 3. Thus the World may see a people that are known enemies to the Christian Faith ; who yet confess, and own that Doctrine, in which the truth and substance of Christianity is clearly shewed forth, and do fully acknowledg that truth of the *Messiah*, to redeem, and deliver the Church, is the undoubted promise of God. 4. And is it not sure such are this day in our sight, that once were an united and flourishing state in their own Land, whose stroak, and judgment in its manner and continuance being now for 1500 years, is such as no instance, present or past through the World, could ever be found to resemble ; but as a Beacon

Beacon on a high hill calls aloud to every age and time of the Church, to enquire what means such a strange and amazing sight as this of the Jews.

Sect. 2. The Second instance I here offer, to shew how great a witness to the truth, and the glorious being of God is in these last times before us; is, *that amazing stroak of induration on the Romish Church*; so strange a thing this is, after such clear breaking up of the truth, how men can at once exercise reason and be Popish; yea in the matters of an eternal interest, that should lye so near, to wrestle with a light that so clearly shews, if the Scripture be true they are undone, and for ever ruined. Here is one of the greatest depths of the judgment of God in the earth; but expressly foretold, *2 Thes. 2. 11.* That such a delusion must be, and *Rev. 16. 8, 9, 10.* What entertainment the light was to meet with from this party, in a blaspheming, and further rage, instead of repenting; and that the darkning of their Kingdom, should make them gnaw their tongue with pain; but not cease to oppose themselves to the clearest evidence of the truth. We should have thought it almost not possible for

for the *Popish* interest to gain more ground by seduction, now after such a shining forth of the Gospel, whatever advantage in former times it had, and in many parts yet hath, by fear and constraint; but this needs not be strange, when Atheism and ignorance are found so effectual to usher it in, and hath a bait therewith so well suited to a licentious time: it is easie to quite the truth for them who never knew it, or the receiving of it in love: and the World may see, that such who fall off to that way, are ingaged this day, not on debate, and from arguments to the judgment. Some particulars I shall here instance, which are known, and owned by the *Romish* Church, and amongst the most concerning articles of their Faith, that all may see and consider, how these possibly can suit with the serious exercise of reason and judgment, and their professed owning the Divinity of the Scripture: if such a judicial stroke as is there expressly foretold, were not thus convincingly verified.

First, That men must quite that judgment of discerning given them of God, and not trust their own eyes, but others, in the great interest of Salvation; yea, thus

thus with their consent be shut out from all proper knowldg of the Scripture, and so far take the Church-guides for the Bible, as on their testimony they must resolve their faith, even whilst they cannot but see the greatest of these more swayed with the concernments of the earth than of heaven, and none more involved in its affairs than such are ; yea, when nothing is more expressly contrary to the command of God both under the Law, *Deut. 6. 6, 7, 8, 9.* and under the Gospel, *Joh. 5. 39.* what an astonishing thing is this ?

2. Is it not like a stroke of madness, to own a blind obedience to men amongst the heights and excellencies of their faith, and account ignorance a part of Religion in such a world where deceit and falsehood are so much in fashion ; and thus in their Souls concernments trust these whose credit and testimony without some further surety they would fear to take for a sum of money ? Oh ! what is this for men to adventure with their eyes shut in the great things of heaven and eternity, and yet not be struck with some fear and jealousie, yea when so many thousands, who are known to be rational and serious in their way,

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do solemnly declare what a contradiction the Doctrine of their Church is to the express letter of the Scripture, and therein offers an appeal to their own inquiry and trial if they will credit that blessed record, if there it be not clearly found, they are deceived and ruined by their spiritual guides. Sure it is, that much less ground of suspicion would cause such open their eyes to try the best securities they have about any outward interest.

3. Is it not clear, that no such slavery is exerted on the bodies of the greatest drudges under the *Turks*, as is here on mens Souls, who see, and yet may not admit their own sight of the plainness and perspicuity of this Scripture, nor this record it bears of it self, that it is fitted to make the simple wise, were it never so clear and plain before them, but must take it from others on trust, that the Christian faith held forth in the Scripture, is not there held forth in intelligible words by the holy Ghost, but a mass of dead Characters, without sense, until their Church-guides put a meaning on it; on which they must resolve their faith, though they should see it most cross to its plain

and genuine sense, yea while they are forced to confess, if they pretend no extraordinary revelation, that the special illumination of the Spirit, by which the word is savingly understood, can from no private Christian be shut up, more than the greatest Doctors of the Church.

4. How amazing a thing is it, to see how far men dare venture, where scarce a shadow or School-problem can be found to take hold on, as to the great foundation of the *Romish* Church, and of all that structure of the Primacy and Infallibility of her head, which is an alledged presidence of *Peter* amongst the Apostles, and some humane traditions thereabout; for it is undeniable, this is the whole on which without further enquiry no less weight is laid over, than the interest and eternal saving or perishing of many millions of Souls, they and their children which are concerned therein; and it is sure, if this presidence of *Peter* fall, and have no solid ground in Scripture, so that it be evinced, the rock on which the Christian Church is built is Jesus Christ, and not *Peter*; then rusheth all the building down, with that high power and infallibility of the *Pope*, which must fall therewith; and if this fall and be found

a cheat, then all his pardons and absolutions founded on that plenary power on which so innumerable a multitude build their peace, and takes as their acquittance into eternity are gone, and can do no good, yea such ruined and undone who have trusted their Souls thereto ; now who is there wouladventure the smalleſt outward interest on ſuch a ground, where if men would but come to be in earnest, nothing can be more clear than this from the Scripture, that the power of the keys was given to the rest of the Apostles as well as to *Peter*, *Mat.* 18. 18, 19. And that he did exerce no ſuch preſidence amongſt them, ſee *Act.* 15. Nor can the leaſt ſolid ground be to judg, he was ever at *Rome*, or had the leaſt peculiар tye thereto, beyond the reſt of the Apostles.

5. As it is a horrid blaſphemey and expreſly contrary to the Scripture to join humane tradition with it, and give the ſame authority thereto, to decide and ground the Churcheſ faith about the truth. It is a ſtrange contradiction to reaſon for men to ſuppoſe or lay weight on the infallibility of Tradition, and clear uninterrupted delivery of the Churcheſ ſenſe on the written word this way, when they cannot but know, what oppo-

opposition general Councils have had to others in the greatest truths, the frequent justlings of the fathers together; yea, is it possible Tradition could be a sure conveyance of the Doctrine of the Church, and its sense on the Scripture, when the whole Christian world was almost turned *Arrians*, that there seemed to be but one *Athanasius* left, and after that falling off to *Mahometanism*, when such times were that stars seemed to fall from heaven, and so many Churches once famous, swallowed up under this black darkness; and it is sure, men cannot but see, how far a relation will vary and become unlike it self, in a very short time. Oh! what a strange thing must delusion be, and a judicial blindness of the mind?

6. Is not here a thing so grossly absurd, that may tempt men to Atheism, and question the certainty of all truth? to hazard an eternal interest and satisfaction of divine justice on some plenary indulgence given out of the Churches treasure, and this from a supposed over-plus of merit in some of the Saints, who had more than enough for themselves, though such whom they must confess were sinners when they were upon the earth, nor can deny that the Scripture sheweth, by one sacri-

fice is the redemption of the elect Church for ever made perfect. I confess, if it were a matter of small moment, and some outward hazard only, men might sport at so notable an imposture; but oh! in a business of eternal salvation and condemnation, how sad and deplorable a sight is this?

7. But admitting such strange principles they own, can they possibly shun such a discovery, at what an uncertainty their Souls are thus ventured, or how any can be secure, 1. If such merits they lean on were indeed more than their own need, whose they are, did require. 2. Though such an over-plus were a truth, can they be sure, in whose hand these were intrusted to dispence, or what is their proper right or warrant to apply them, when for this from the Scripture there is no shadow, and from them the world cannot possibly know.

3. How are they sure, but by a long continued application, in so many thousand plenary Indulgences founded thereon, they may be already exhausted, and lost their wonted strength; but oh! an answer to all these astonishing things is too evident, that a judicial stroke from the Lord is such that no reason is able to cure,

8. This may be the more wonderful,
when

when it is so clear, except men will shut their own eyes, that here is a lucrative interest, money for merit, as the procuring cause, for want of which the poor and friendless must perish; and thus the highway-robber, if he can save his neck, is sure to have his Soul safe, by giving some part of the purse he hath taken to the Priest. Thus no absolute necessity for one to be religious and rich at once, who hath enough whereby to purchase the merit of others, and how to expiate all guilt, and secure his after-hazard by present money, and a liberal hand to the Church.

9. How sad and amazing a sight is it, to see men so infatuate in the veneration of the reliques of the Saints, and ascribe such efficacy thereto, both spiritual and for outward diseases; when if they would open their eyes, there is such manifest appearance of deceit, that they know they must pay for their toil and respect to such things to them who visibly pursue their own gain that way, and can have no assurance, but such may be the bones of some malefactors, and that it be an imposture rather than a miracle, how the milk of the Virgin *Mary* 1500 years, and the bones of the Apostles should be kept uncorrupted, when the

attesters thereof all may see, have that politick interest of money for it, which in every time drives many thousands not to deceive others only, but to ruin their own souls.

i o. How strange a contradiction is here for men to admit the morality of the first and second Command, as the law of their God, and its being perpetually binding, which so exptessly says, *Thou shalt not bow down, nor worship the likeness of any thing, &c.* and yet both authoritatively determine and practise the contrary. It is sure there, all adoration of the invisible God, under a visible representation is most plainly forbidden; and that *Aarons Calf*, and these at *Dan* and *Bethel*, though the worship thereof was intended for the true God, yet by him was found Idolatry. But what subtily of distinctions, or of that respect pretended therein to the prototype can make ones pillow soft on their death-bed, when they must instantly pass in before his Tribunal, whose law they have thus used.

i i. As it is clearly repugnant to the Scripture, how strange a contradiction to reason is here? That there should be a transubstantiating of the bread and wine

wine in the Sacrament into the real body and blood of Jesus Christ ; when 1. It can be no more a Sacrament, when turned into the thing signified. 2. Can the accidents, such as colour, taste, smell, possibly remain and exist without the subject. 3. Can one and the same numerical body, which is finite, be in the same moment of time in many thousand places through the earth, remotely distant from other ; yea thus can there be a penetration of bodies, when all must confess , the nature of bodily substances is to be impenetrable. How sad a sight is it, for so many to resign the liberty of their Souls so far to others, that they must quit both sense and reason at once, and may not search the Scripture to know what is held forth there.

12. Can it be supposed, such are in earnest, if there be not a judicial stroke on their judgment, to pray to one dead man, in the behalf of another ? to these who cannot hear, for them who are past help ? yea, that men should be so far without fear and feeling, as to reckon a liberty to destroy themselves some special advantage, and that a dispensation from the Pope for violating the express Law and command of God , will be enough to stand be-

twixt

twixt them and his avenging justice.

I shall further add but this one instance here (having some occasion to give a more full account of their Doctrine in the close of this Treatise) how strange and amazing a thing is it, for men to plead, yea ground their faith so much on an uninterrupted succession in their Church ; when yet they expressly hold a nullity both of Baptism and Ordination, if the intention of the Priest stand not right thereto ; and that this is essentially necessary for it ; for thus how shall the world know, but most of their Popes and Clergy be both without Baptism, and still Laicks without Ordination ; and so no possible access for the Church to know either the certainty of Succession, or Infallibility of a Judg.

These few particulars I have only instanced of the Doctrine, and known tenets of the *Romish* Church, to witness how convincing a seal this is to the Scripture, in so strong a delusion, these are visibly given up to, for which I do appeal their Conscience, and that confession themselves make to the world, if any thing contrary to these principles they publickly own and admit be here charged upon them. It is a sight I confess should be sad, to see so

so great a darkening of the truth, and so much of the Christian world perish, and will not once open their eyes; but it is well, such a clear discovery is here also, which on another account calls to rejoice, and be more strengthened in the way of the Lord, that we know such a party is this day in the earth, and before us, whose being, appearance, and these advantages they now boast of are so undeniable a witness to the truth, if we consider these things.

1. There is such a piece of the Scripture, that fore-tells the Man of Sin, the manner of his approach, with the whole destiny of his reign and fall, which must needs take place, and have an application to some particular party, except we quit all certainty of Divine truth, for if one line, or one syllable of this should fail, we were done, and our security in the greatest interest broken, since the faithfulness of God stands good for every part of his word as well as the whole.

2. It is clear, this picture was drawn by the Holy Ghost, of such an adversary, now a Thousand five hundred years past, what should be his form, and shape, the way of his appearance, with his true proportion and lineaments.

3. Except we deny

deny our senses, it is certain, that such we see with our eyes, as are there shewed forth, so as none ever knew more clearly the face of a man, by seeing his picture exquisitely done, and to the life, in a frame, then the Church this day may know the Antichrist, and find him out. I suppose one in some remote part of the earth were brought to understand the Scriptures, and in his enquiry there, were astonished with these discoveries he finds of so strange an adversary, with an earnest desire to know if he hath been yet made known to the world, let him have a true and particular account of the *Romish* Church in its complex frame and state, in its duration, the way of their rule, and in how different a mould it is cast from all the Kingdoms of the world, his own eyes and reason, though nothing from others were told, might shew how clear and exact a resemblance is to be found there to that map, and discovery, which with amazement he had before seen, and read in the Bible. 4. Is it not to admiration now obvious, how many ages past, these were fore-told about this adversary, as they are this day before us in the event, when not the least shadow or appearance of such future emergences was

to

to be seen , or could have entred into mens thoughts, to shew this, only from the Holy Ghost could have been revealed to the Church, to whom all his works are known from the beginning. 5. Where were we if such a sight were not this day, as the *Romish* Church, what now it is, and in former ages hath been, and how sore a dash and crushing should it be to the Faith of the Saints, to cause a questioning of the whole Scripture, when such concerning Prophesies that respect most of the times of the New Testament have no being in the event, nor now possibly could have; for according to the word it is clear, this great adversary in his rise must begin with the very first times of the Church under the New Testament, and his continuance such, that the last stroke, and his being utterly abolished is to be one of the nearest presages of the second coming of the Lord.

Sect. 3. There is one great event of the Scripture I shall further add, which in so dark a day might pres a more serious enquiry and observation thereof , to see how this answers the promise, when so obvious and sensible a contradiction seems

seems none to it ; that a more flourishing state of the Church should be in these last times on the ruines, and down-fall of Anti-christs Kingdom, which cannot go back under all these assaults and oppositions of men, but is such that the one interest must advance, and the other further decline. This is a truth we know the Lord hath ensured by his faithfulness, 2 Thes. 2. 8. Rev. 17.13. and chap. 16, compared with 20. 1, 2, 3, 4. which does so evidently contemporate therewith ; to which also many Prophesies that concern the state of the Church in the latter days bear a most clear witness ; that the most eminent appearances of God, the greatest enlargement, and of the longest continuance, that his Church should have under the New Testament to meet in such a period of time, and then should her Spring begin, after a long and sharp winter, that went before ; it is clear also, that the time of the Promise is certainly come, which causeth great thoughts of heart unto many, whilst so much from present sense seems to speak a visible contradiction thereto ; for it cannot be denied, that the Lords work about the Reformed Church looks now every-where to be a work of judgment, we see searching trials, some amazing

mazing depths, and intricacies of Providence, how strange a meeting there is this day of contrary tydes, that seem to drive most back, and on every hand to bring in difficulties, yea such a present darkness and faint almost on all, as former times of the Church did not know ; but to witness the certainty of the Promise, that the world may see the God of the Reformed Church doth still own that interest, and this his word, who is faithful and true, yea that nothing is here ; but what may strengthen more than shake ; these things I offer to be seriously considered.

First, when such a present darkness is, is it not known also ? how bright a day did go before this, and what an immediate appearances of God by most stupendious providences then was to rescue his truth, and people from the power of Antichrist, so that though our night should be more dark, none can question such a seal, which before the Sun, to the amazement, and conviction of the world, with so full a witness and assurance on the spirits of his people, yea I must say with extraordinary signs and confirmations from himself, he hath put to the cause of the Reformed Church.

2. It is known in every step of the Churches rising, that whatever instruments in an ordinary way could promise, yet something far above this both in their calling forth, and excitement, and actings hath been clearly witnessed, to shew that immediate holding from Heaven, and by an extraordinary divine power, for verifying of the promise the reformed Church hath of her possession and interest?

3. Is it not easie this day to see so sad and dismal an hour now upon the Church is not more obvious than the provoking cause, and the righteousness of God no less clear therein than the cloud is dark, for I must say, these many years past who could have their eyes about them, and not fear upon so visible a departure from the truth, and falling off from love, tenderness, and the power of religion, through all the reformed Churches, but that either the Scripture should fail, and want its accomplishment, or some remarkable stroke was near; yea that a sharp cure the Church must have, or else be undone, and the judgment of God be an help, when all other means have proved so ineffectual; and should it not be a strengthening remark in such a day, that the Churches zeal and straightness, and her

her Sun-shine have been seen to rise and set together.

4. Amidst these strange disappointments of the times, and visible breaking of humane props, it is known also, how carnally the weapons of our warfare have been managed? how fond upon the grandeur of a civil state, and the shadow and friendship of great men, as though the Spirit of the Lord had not done more than all humane might or power to put the Churches on their feet? Thus have we gone out of the way of our strength, and founded our confidence on grounds of sense, and forgot these great appearances of God in times of greatest weakness, where there was much trusting, and little sense; and it may be too clearly seen, how few amongst the throng of professed Protestants know what it is to have the Bible for the security of the Protestant Interest, and thus quiet their soul, though all the foundations seem to shake, because they know the Cause is certainly God's, and he is faithful who hath promised.

5. It is most discernible, that as no outward advantage put in the Churches hand, but hath still some further weight laid thereon than it could bear; so have

we seen such a dependance make the most promising-means to miscarry. Oh! for many years have not our eyes been shut, to discern how far our strength hath departed, by so large a reckoning upon visible props, the support and countenance of Princes, while we forgot the guide of our youth, and the Covenant of our God, that for this hath the Churches hair been cut, and exposed to their contempt, who sometimes were forced to look upon her with fear and wondering, when God was known in her Palaces for a refuge. It is sure carnal confidence hath a curse waiting on it in the Bible, *Jer. 17.8.*, and where the Lord hath cursed, none can make it thrive.

6. Yet under so sad a discovery, and whatever as to publick appearances may be seen of the Lords departure, it is sure there hath been no such time that a man can say, his uprightness and love to the truth fails him, or ceaseth to have inward joy and peace following it, and that in any secret corner, where integrity and staightness is found, there wants a witness of Gods taking pleasure therein. No, e're this fail, the shadow must cease to follow the body. It is indeed an hour of desertion; but such as lets us see our sin, but give no dash to our

our duty. It is a witness for God against mens indifference, remissness, and carnal boasting in following the truth, but in it self a visible confirmation thereof, and thus doth the Church more help than hurt.

7. We see this clear, that under the new Testament, the whole militant Church as well as particular Churches, hath her remarkable periods, as of tranquillity so of trouble, and demolishing, when sack-cloth is every where shaped out for her; yea I must say it is not cross to the Word, but may be further coafirming thereto; that in so far as there is no through-reformation, and some Antichristian mixture found amongst the Reformed Churches; in so far these also should get some touch of the judgment (though to heal, and not to ruin) that comes along with the pouring out of the viols on the Throne of the Beast.

8. So sore a desertion is found not only to suit the times of the Gospel, but the best times thereof, and to a rising day of the Church, for this in the way and method of Providence is most clear, that no great piece of the Lords work for his truth and people hath been ever brought forth, but with sore wrestlings, and is seen

to stay long in the birth, the most remarkable mercies have been first lost, and made hopeless before they were found, yea no observable brightness but by some dark hour hath been ushered in, for which there needs no particular instances as in *Egypt*, and in *Mordecay's* time, since the whole Scripture doth witness this.

9. We have this day seen nothing but what might have been looked for, that the trials of the Church should be suited to her light, and keep some proportion therewith, and where so great a trust, and talent hath been given, such searching times must come about, to seek in its return, and improvement, for this answers to the way of the Lord and his Word; nor is it strange to see a peoples stroke and trouble suited to that degree of their former exaltation. See *Luk. 12. 48.* What sharp and perplexing times are there after so large a measure of light held forth, nor is it strange, these things fall in with our day, which did not meet the Reformed Churches at their breaking up, who had not our discoveries of the truth with so long, and bright shining forth of the light.

10. This should not be strange, when
the

the faith of the Saints hath got great confirmations, that searching times then follow, for where nothing is to shake and offend, there can be no tried establishment. See *Joh. 16.* *Do you now believe,* saith our blessed Lord to his Disciples, *the hour is coming, and now is when you shall all be scattered.* This we find after such pains he had taken to confirm them, yea thus is it seen how trials are suited to the greatness of that work the Lord hath on foot. See *Jer. 29. 1c.* there is a time when all things cry, *be in pain* and unusual wrestlings before some remarkable birth.

11. However present appearances look, we know a sad desertion, and the Churches real growth, with her gaining ground, can at once suit together, whose true interest without taking a false measure; none can judg. 1. From outward grandeur, since oppression and greatest weights have been still found to make way for her growth, and for that end was *Pharaoh* raised of the Lord, to make the Churches rising more conspicuous. 2. Not from the nearest, and immediate events, until the Vision speak, and bring the whole complex Providence before us. 3. Nor can a true measure be taken from the present reaping,

since a hid growth is oft found, where the seed lies long under ground, which the Children may reap, that seemed lost to these who went before. 4. Not from a great falling off, since the Churches interest is oft no less promoted this way, and the truth sealed, than by the bringing in of others. 5. Not from sad afflicting times, since out of the greatest depths, hath the most near and sensible approach to God been known, which in the issue hath helped more to raise than all her troubles could ruin. 6. It is clear also, not from the indignation of the Lord gone forth against the Church, can we take such a measure; since her bearing thereot is found a begun step in her relief, and to an open pleading of her cause, and bringing her forth to the light, *Mic. 7. 9.* where we see though the Church is thus laid on the dust, yet is her interest kept alive in her cause, to bring her up with it, when the Lord shall declare his being a pleader thereof.

12. Though it now look like the going down of the Sun on most of the Reformed Churches, and that therewith we have so affrighting a sight before us, what hath

hath befallen many famous Churches in former times ; yet is there solid ground, I humbly judg without flattering our selves, or any over-stretching our hope, to see here these different periods of time, how such a Sun-set, and the utter dissipation of these Churches, did then with a remarkable and sad *crisis* meet with the entry of that long and dismal night of Antichrists reign, his begun rising, and that breaking in also of such a deluge of *Mahometism*, which did after follow, yea thus in a time, when having sinned away their light , the Scripture was to have an accomplishment in the Lords departure , and that great work of his Judgment then coming on the Christian world : But now we see, and certainly know , how this strange and unusual darkness over the Church, in a blessed conjunction and *crisis*, does meet with Antichrists begun fall, and a growing light ; and upon the Churches rise, when the interest of the Gospel now is upon the ascendant, and when it is so clear, what now is under the Mediators hand to be brought forth; which is a farther extent of his visible Kingdom to build, and not to cast down, to plant and not to cut

off these Churches, in the planting of which as ground gained from Antichrist, yea in pursuance of a full conquest he did so eminently appear.

I must further add this, though it seem to beget a fear, and hesitation with some; the ceasing of such great signs and appearances of the Lord, in the behalf of the truth, that were once seen, and how to answer that question, *Where is the Lord God of our Elijahs,* and his great power, and out-stretched arm, by which he shewed terrible things for his people, as a return of their prayers. Let us consider, 1. It is the same reproached and darkened cause of the Protestant Church, which God once visibly owned, and did bear witness to by great and extraordinary signes of his power, so that all may see it is not the truth, but falling off from it, with which he now quarrels. 2. Such extraordinary evidences we now are not to wait for, when so great a breaking up of light, beyond former times, hath been to clear the truth; for this were to tempt the most high, who at the first dawning of his work, when difficulties seemed in an ordinary way insuperable, did thus appear, 3. Even under

der such a cloud there want not some great and immediate confirmations from the Lord; and a visible witness from him to the cause of the Reformed Church, if we had eyes to see. 1. That with the saddest hour, and exigence of the Church, some step of Providence hath still been made to appear, and therewith so remarkable a breaking forth of light, as it were out of the bowels of such a darkness, that the things which threatened most hath more fully answered the Churches mercy, than any way we could have chosen. No such black cloud hath been, but some enlightening Providence, and marvelous witness of the Lords condescendence we have seen as it were set over against it, yea still some new ground of hope made to break up, so as to balance with a day of greatest fears. 2. We cannot but see since the Lord hath made it so clear, that there is some hewing of stones, and preparing of materials under all this ruin, such as points at some great and excellent building, which yet is bringing forward. 3. And hath there not been a discernible growth of light, and more clear discoveries of the truth, that have gone forth with these ruining times.

times. 4. How convincing a restraint from the Lord upon mens wrath, to pursue their advantage and power against the truth, and its followers, I must say hath to admiration been witnessed in this low estate of the Reformed Church, and such diverting Providences as have constrained their violence to run in another channel. 5. This all may see, for their confirming more in the truth, that these who in such a day have fallen off to Popery, have had their way visibly ushered in by Atheism and Ignorance, or the byass of some outward interest, and thus found it easie to change their Religion, who never yet in earnest embraced any, yea to turn Popish, e're they knew what it was to be Christians: Now for this I dare appeal the conscience of the most ordinary observers. 6. Hath there not been oft cause to observe how the greatest essays of the adversary, which seemed to speak a present ruin, have brought forth the very contrary effects. No such storm on the Church but some rent thereby hath been payed to the truth: no present loss, but another way there was found some visible advantage, nor have such signs been wanting of the Lords im-

immediate appearance in the darkest hour, that may witness his peoples gleanings are yet this day better than the full vintage of his adversaries ; and with much solid assurance it may be further said, whatever former ages have seen of the Lords marvelous doings to confirm his truth, and the cause of the Reformed Church, in the sight of the Nations, there are yet greater things to be brought forth ; and a rare history of Providence shall be writ, and transmitted to the posterity where these two must be recorded together, and meet in one witness ; which is foretold,
Rev. 15. 3. Great and marvelous are thy works, O Lord ; and just and true are thy ways.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

IN prosecution of this Subject, a second particular proposed, I shall here endeavour to clear, which is the *great import of the preceeding demonstration*, how *marvelous a light doth thence result to the Church*, and what a witness is this day of the near approach and condescendence of the Lord, to the faith of his people, and a price for wisdom thus put in their hand, by bringing forth his word, and the certainty of its taking place so convincingly before us in the event; which I must say, were it understood, might be of that use to make our believing and adventuring on the truth as plain and comfortable a way, and as fully quieting to the Soul, as the way of sense and feeling; but oh how strange is it that whilst such a thing cannot be hid, yet is so little laid to heart, that it seems most of Christians do not really know what is the estate they possess, but in their converse with Supernatural truths, are like men half waking, who see things before them, yet is it so far a dream, that there wants a serious reflecting on the great reality of

of such things they see. Now to clear what a light breaks thus up to the Church, from these discoveries of the faithfulness of God in his Word, and such wonderful events, wherein it takes place; I offer these *Twelve Inferences.*

Sect. i. First we see here the eminent verification of this truth, that *unto the Church are committed the Oracles of God*, Rom. 3. 2. How so unvaluable, and sacred a treasure that by no private conveyance, but by a publick delivery was once put in her hand, is still under trust deposited there to be kept; and made use of unto the second coming of the Lord. I know this is a truth by few under debate or question, yet how few are there found to believe it, or so much in earnest as to bring it near their thoughts, how such a record is, and should this day be in the world, where as real an intercourse with Heaven and the Glorious God whose Throne is there, is certainly to be had, as if with our eyes we should see some every hour come thence with their face shining, and written tables in their hand of the Counsels of God to his people; now as here is a matter of the

the greatest concernment that ever was made known to men; in what a transport of joy should it put our Soul to know we have no less clear and demonstrative evidence of its certainty by the verification of the Scripture, that such are the very *Oracles of God*, which came down from himself, and does, 1. Stand open day and night for giving answers to the Church, so as none needs fear to come at a wrong hour, or miss their errand, when they come, if they indeed seek counsel there, that they may follow it. 2. Which shew forth things to come, and the great revolutions of the world, with their proper circumstances, when not the smallest appearance thereof from outwards things could be judged. 3. Which have at all times a certain sound, and leaves none in the dark, with a doubtful response; but let the world be what it will unto the righteous, it sayeth, *Surely it shall be well with them*, Isa. 3. 10, 11. While it hath this audible voice to others, *There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked, nor shall it be well with them, though their days should be prolonged in the earth*, Eccles. 8. 12. 4. These all may see, are the very *Oracles of God*, which

which regard not the persons of men, but with an awful voice do speak to Cities and Kingdoms, and to the greatest Monarchs there, to the Judg on the Bench, and the man of violence, when his oppression is backed with power, what none else dare tell. 5. Which gives answers contrary to humane reason, and visible appearances, yet to this day did its sentence never fail, or deceive the man who trusted thereto. But when the suffrage of the Scripture, and of the world are in most direct opposition to other, it doth not long want a visible decision, whose word shall stand. 6. These who enquire here, will find the way of the Lord so far laid open in the darkest times, that they may as evidently see the ~~way~~ and demonstrative causes of the strange Judgments that are falling out in the Earth as the certainty of their accomplishment. 7. And are they not found to be *living Oracles*, as *Act. 7.38.* which do not convey light only, but heat and power to the Soul. 8. It is no report but of undoubted experience, how clear a discovery is thence to a Christian, when no-where else he could know his way, or understand these great depths: 1. The depths

depths of Satan, which thus are found out, and made discerable for keeping at a distance therewith. 2. These depths of Providence which are so marvelously unvailed, and opened up there when once a Christian gets near these Oraeles. 3. How thus also is there a further enlightening of the Church, and in every time some opening up of the deep things of God in his Word, which lay hid there from former ages.

Sect. 2. This clear discovery is here from our more full perswasion of the truth, what marvelous things have a present being and existence now before our eyes in the event, which many ages before they were brought forth, we know had a visible being in the Scripture, and there were revealed and looked after by the Church. This is a truth I must say, so great and convincing, and of that use to confirm the faith of the Saints, and be a helper to their joy, that the ordinary impression most have thereof, shew how little it is either known or seriously considered.

1. That nothing is here conjectural, where a mistake can be from the events being afar off, and remote from our senses,

ses, but as we know they are written in the Bible, and there only have been revealed; it is as sure, they are visible realities in our sight this day, and for what thereof is not accomplished, it may be a further Seal to the truth, when this is so clear the time for their taking place is not yet come. 2. Can men open their eyes and not see the greatest Prophecies of the Old Testament are at this day fulfilled, except they contradict their sense as well as reason; even such as the whole race of the *Jews* attest to be a part of the Oracles of God committed to their forefathers, and by them owned, and delivered with a most severe circumspection to the least letter or tittle thereof from one age to another? 3. It is undeniable also, these events are such, that all the Diviners of the world, by the stars, or any probable conjunction of natural causes, could never reach, or have the least discovery of their rise, to bring them under their prædictions; but any glance they have had was by a light borrowed from the Bible; so that the certainty thereof being clear, men cannot but see these are depths not only above the furthest reach of humane un-

K derstanding'

derstanding, but above the reach of fallen Angels, or any depths of the bottomless pit to find out such things as the Scripture hath shewed; yea let a search be made amongst the wise, and learned of this world, (for which I attest the greatest Atheists) if either *Aristotle* or *Plato*, or any since, who came to the greatest height of natural knowledg, in all their discoveries had ever the least thought or notion of such things as a new Creation, of the power and efficacy of the Gospel, or that there is a *holy Ghost*, and what his witnessing, comforting, and teaching imports, which yet to the meanest of the Saints, are as clear and certain, as that there is day and night.

sect. 3. This may be clearly seen from the precedeing demonstration, how the most wonderful works of God, and his greatest appearances in the earth are peculiarly directed to confirm and seal the truth of his Word, which he hath magnified above all his name; and for this end, to give a being and visible performance to the Scripture, the most glorious actings of the Mediator under the New Testament are shewed forth, for which cause when he is

is going forth to war, in the greatness of his strength, with his vesture dipt in blood, he is known by that name, *The Word of God, Rev. 19. 13.* These also are in every time obvious evictions of this truth; 1. How the most extraordinary steps in the way of the Lord, which are visibly above nature, and out of the road of second causes; yet go not without the bounds and limits of the Bible, but are such as to the conviction of all, may be easie to bring within sight of that blessed record, and a convincing Seal and verification thereof. 2. It is clear also, how these Providences that are of the greatest extent and have a further reach than any private use, or the personal experience of the Saints, yea are such whereby the whole Church hath her publick remarks, and *experi-
ta lucifera*, are for that end evidently direct, to shew the destiny and fate of flourishing Cities and States, and of the greatest Monarchs, is no casual thing, but the visible product of the Scripture, which there have been foretold.⁴ This also may be clearly seen, how neither *Greece* nor *Rome*, whose Conquests once were spread through most of the known world, did ever know such Triumphs as the Truth and Faithfulness of

God hath had over the Thrones of Kingdoms, as well as the meanest Cottages, which as it makes the Sea keep her bounds, so doth it restrain the rage of man, yea brings down from their seat to an untimely grave such as have made the earth to tremble, and the Nations shake in their day; while it may be no less marvelous in raising the poor from the dust, to witness, there is nothin^g wherein the Lord doth more conspicuously appear, and shew the greatness of his power, than in bringing his word to a performance.

Sect. 4. Is it not an undeniable and clear *Inference*, from what hath been held forth of these great events of the Scripture, That it is sure this day there is more at our hand, to be convincing and demonstrative of the truth, if we could advert thereto, than if *an immediate audible voice from heaven were given*. I know if once such an extraordinary sign from the Lord might be had, men would be ready to think, there needed no more to put them beyond all hesitation and debate; such is the ignorance of many, who know not what they possess and is already at their hand, when more is really given than mens heart could in this ask,

ask, as the holy Ghost does expressly shew, *I Pet. 1. 18, 19*, if the fence of that Scripture were seriously pondered, *And this voice which came from heaven, we heard when we were with him in the holy mount*; but to shew, that here is more than any such voice now given the Church for her assurance of the truth, see *v. 19*, *We have a more sure word of prophesie, unto which you do well to take heed, &c.* wherein is clearly held forth : 1. That something else than an ordinary regard to the Scripture is in this required, for a through perswasion of its truth; there is a *taking heed*, προσέχοντες, which imports a singular attention where the Soul followeth the eye as in an intense motion. 2. That thus is there an other sight to be had of the written Word, and of these wonderful things there, which through *not taking heed* most pass by, and do not discern. 3. It is most clear, how such an advertence and *taking heed* to the Scripture is understood here, with some peculiar respect thereto, as it is a *more sure word of prophesie*; how it takes place, and hath such demonstrative evidences of the certainty of its truth in the event; for thus doth the Apostle oppose it to so extraor-

dinary a sign from heaven. 4. It cannot be possibly supposed, that the word as it is written should be *more sure*, as to an objective certainty, than his speaking to men by an audible voice, since both are his own word. But by such a preference as is here held forth, there is this clearly witnessed, that in the way of the written word more is really given to the Church, if it were rightly understood, and that we could but advert thereto, for begetting a further subjective certainty within the Soul, than either miracles or any extraordinary sign from heaven could do. Now to evince this, how great a light thus may be had, and should break up by *taking heed* to the Word, as it is a *more sure word of prophecy*, I offer these, 1. Is it not clear, from so wonderful a product of the Scripture, above nature or natural causes, and these great appearances of God there which are so near, even to our touch and feeling; how convincingly they bring a greater demonstration of the truth to mens eyes, than so extraordinary a voice could bring to their ears. 2. It is sure, such a discovery is in this day to be had of the written word, that in a more discernible way than by any outward voice

voice or sound may be known by power and life, yea by that ineffable evidence and light, with so near and feeling a converse with the invisible God, as there is found and experienced by every one of the Saints, that can make it no less discernible from the word of man, than if we heard it by some audible and articulate voice spoken out of heaven. 3. What *Jacob* saw but in a vision, may we not here see with our eyes, by such a *taking heed*; a *Ladder set betwixt heaven and earth*, by which the glorious God his coming down to converse with the Church and the Souls of his people, is by as near an approach witnessed in the written word, as if he should come with such a stupendious extraordinary voice: so that as the top of this ladder, in its descent and original is seen to reach to heaven; it is sure, nothing can be more visible, than how its foot also toucheth the earth, and thus its other end is on the ground, to the sense and feeling of the weakest Christian, in their experience of the truth. 4. By *taking heed* to the Scripture is not such an evidence and attestation to be had of its truth, from a continued *series* of events, and the known certainty thereof, that for our be-

ing sure and throughly confirmed, doth far exceed any transient irradiation of the mind, which so strange a voice and sound from heaven could cause? 5. To shew the preference of the word to all extraordinary means, we see it is the very last way and mean now for revealing the counsel of God to the Church; yea how it is suited to these times, when the greatest light and most clear opening up of the truth is expressly promised, and to be looked after as that which hath the advantage every way of more extraordinary signs, whereby in former times the counsels of God were revealed. O if men knew, or would but let themselves know, what here might be reached by such a serious enquiry, and *taking heed* to the Scripture, how easie were it to see that something much greater than an audible voice from Heaven is this day at their hand, to assure them of its truth.

sect. 5. Here we may clearly see such a reality and substance in the supernatural truths of the word, that whoever will they may come and *feel after God there*, and with the greatest certainty of sense be conducted to the things themselves, which most within the

the Church know but in the *theory* and notion. This is indeed a convincing evidence, and such as nothing possibly can be beyond it; if we consider, 1. How the object here is not at a distance, but in its approach so near, as any thing can be, which is found and touched in mens hands, where they know it is no mistake, but in the greatest composure of spirit, have a present and rational reflexion on their own experience. 2. Such as they are sure it can be no casual thing, nor is it a groping in the dark; but thus every step in the road of sense and feeling is by rule and method, which hath Scripture-light shining before it, so that they know by experience, this is nothing else but what they were called to believe, and could have read in the Bible before they knew any such thing: for thus are the written Word and the experience of the Saints, found such relatives, and the tye betwixt them so discernible, as in the most obvious connexion that possibly could be in nature, betwixt the cause and the effect, or the fountain and the stream. 3. What here is felt, and proved to be in the way of the Word, we see also is the repeated experience of others, even of the whole race
of

of the Saints, who in that good and old way of converse with God, and following him, did in all ages bear the same witness. 4. That this *feeling* is an undoubted reality, is so clear, that these now know it who could not believe the truth of such a thing, and did no less look thereon as a dream, than most of this generation do; until the truth once touched them at the heart. 5. And is it not such a *feeling* that there can be no more sure converse by the senses with this visible world, than that the Saints have with these great things revealed in the Bible, when they cannot but witness what they have both seen and known?

Sect. 6. Thus is it clear from the foregoing demonstration, how great an assistance sense offers to the Christians faith, and what solid improvements might be made this way, for a more through reliance on the security of the Word and Promise, when so much is given, that men may see as well as believe. For which some things would be previously considered, how this is to be understood, and what a certainty is here, that we are not grasping at a shadow, in a matter of such weight

weight and near concernment to us. 1. It is sure, there are spiritual things, and great supernatural truths of the written Word to be known by sight as well as by faith, whilst we are here; nor is there any of the Saints but can as firmly abide by their spiritual sense, and the reality thereof, as by that which is natural; that the one is no less undoubtedly certain than the other. 2. We clearly see, how the Lord himself makes an appeal to the sense and experience of his people, *Isa.40.28. Hast thou not heard? hast thou not known?* and that such a trial is called for, to taste and see if he be not what his word declares him to be, *Psal.54.8.* where he hath so far condescended, that none needs take his word on trust from men, but their own eyes may see it. 3. Though it is clear, that so much is witnessed to our reason, that no natural science, no proposition in *Euclide* can have such firm and sure demonstrations as the truth of the written Word; yet is it not too obvious, what hesitation and dark apprehensions are about this, if some other sight and feeling than what by nature or natural reason can be had, be not in earnest sought after. 4. I confess it is one of the excellencies of faith to believe and not see

see ; yea these are most blessed , for here we must *walk by faith, not by sight,* which is the very first and last work of a Christian. But I fear a sad mistake many are in of the right sense of this, as if to believe were some dark and uncomfortable thing, and that the less men see before them, it were so far a higher act of their faith, since this only can be understood, *quoad evidentiam rei, sed non quoad evidentiā testimonii;* that when no appearances are of the things promised, or how such should be, then to credit the word for all, is a giving glory to God, and one of the choicest acts of faith within time; But for what concerns the evidence and certainty of the Word, and our security therein, I must say, it is some higher degree Christians are called to seek and look after, that their walking this way may be by sight, than seems to be either thought of, or believed by most within the Church ; yea such an evidence thereof, that might be truly *physical,* and as infallibly sure, as men can have of the being of the Sun, when they see it with their own eyes. 5. Is it not undeniable, that according to the degree of evidence, so doth the Soul adventure on the truth, so doth it embrace

brace it as good, yea thus only can it have a sweet repose and comfort by a fiducial re-cumbence thereon? And on this account is it not clear, how it is the want of *sense* that makes so great a want of faith amongst the Saints?

Having premised these things for giving some light to this truth, and to prevent mistake, I shall but in a few words more touch it, since what hath been held forth in the preceeding Chapters, bear the same witness, how great a discovery is thus of the Truth, and certainty of the written Word; and what marvelous advantage is at our hand to believe, if we could see it aright. But for a further clearing I offer here these solid improvements of *sense*, that may be convincingly obvious to every discerning Christian.

1. How such hath his experience of the Word which he knows well, and hath been so oft repeated, that as a lighted Torch does go before him in every new act of his faith, for what is to come, and lets him see it is no dark or untrodden path, nor is it a fixing on some doubtful and abstract notion; but that assuredly he is on safe and known ground here, yea such that as he *knows whom here he hath believed*, and is sure it is the same Word, and the very same sealed Truth

and

and security which he hath often trusted, and had it made good. O what might be found here, to make a Christians way pleasant and easie , if the solid improvement of this were but understood. 2. Is there not such an assistance *sense* affords for believing , that it can shew how great a part of the Bible is already put in the Christians hand by present possession ; yea thus points him to the very particular Truths, where the day-star hath been made to arise within his heart , with so sensible a breaking up of light, and comfort, and strength, amidst his saddest hours, as hath oft put him to set a mark thereon, like *Jacobs* erecting his pillar, how there the comforter and his soul did meet, when no meeting could have been more seasonable. 3. It is not the object of our Faith only, but we know by sight how visible an impress of the written Word is on the serious and tender walk of the Saints, that as the one is so convincingly so is the other also ; yea thus how many impressions thereof are in every age seen to be cast off I am sure to the conviction of the world. 4. And is it not by *sense* we know the undoubted certainty of these truths , which are the greatest contra-

contradiction to our outward senses, how there is a rejoicing in tribulation, a real abounding under wants, a being strong when we are weak; yea, that an unspeakable comfort can be really had out of the greatest depths of a Christians trouble.

5. We know also by sense, that as every living thing hath food suited to its kind, such a substance is in the Scripture, and a natural suiting of the Truths there, to feed, nourish, and strengthen a spiritual life, with as great a fitness, as our daily bread can be to that which is natural. 6. It is the undoubted witness of sense, that there is a power in Godliness, as well as the form, and such an evidence, and *demonstration of the spirit*, with the Word, that its sound can be no more sure and discernible to the ear, than it is to the Soul of a Christian. 7. Except we quit our sight, as well as reason, we must see such a vital scent and air there is with serious godliness, as no false shew could ever counterfeit, no more than art can make a dead picture breath and stir; yea that the product of the Gospel, and these great effects it hath in the world are indeed above nature, and such as no humane power, or moral influence could possibly reach. 8. It is not only

only from the Bible, but with the greatest certainty of *sense*, that the Saints know, there is an immediate presence of the Comforter, acceptance and access in prayer, the Spirits making intercession in them with sighs and groans which cannot be uttered, yea such an immediate relief and comfort to the Soul so sensibly found there, that makes their very bones to bless him, and say, *who is like unto thee O Lord.*

9. Is it not made obvious to our *sense*, that when once men are engaged in the way of the Lord, they have got some new acquaintance, and some other Society than men to converse with; yea what a marvellous change grace then makes on them, from what they were, to assure us of that change glory will ere long make on them from what they now are? 10. Can there any thing be more evident, than this to our *sense*, that where grace is in a vigorous exercise in any, it gives another appearance than once they had, yea then it doth shine with such a lustre, as will darken all about them? I shall but further add, what may be as evident to sense as that there is light and darkness, that inbred contrariety which is in most of men against holiness, and how thus there are two

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contrary states here, to witness the certainty of these contrary states of heaven and hell in another world.

Sect. 7. Thus we may see, that to those who believe is the exceeding greatness of the power of God, and his mighty working, most eminently shewed forth; yea in the way of the Word, and its continued verification, more than in any extraordinary path. This is the testimony of the Holy Ghost, *Eph. 1. 19*; which though strange and amazing, yet nothing more sure, that there is none of the Saints who is exercised unto godliness, but may know the truth of undeniable Miracles, and a real converse therewith, within his soul, if a more serious reflection were on his own experience, how immediately from Heaven these are wrought. I confess it may seem to bring it under debate, if this can be a truth, or if it be really believed, when it doth not cause a more frequent transport of joy, and wondering among Christians, thus to know such near and sensible communications betwixt God and their soul, by the Scripture; and that it is found from him, which under their saddest pressures makes their

work easie, both in them and about them; yea, how the greatest effects of a supernatural and divine Power that ever was shewed to men, such as to raise the dead, open the eyes of the blind, and to bring forth a Creation out of nothing, are surely acted over in the heart of each of the Saints, though spiritually, yet in as great a reality there, and with no less demonstrative evidence of Gods immediate Power, as there can be of these extraordinary Miracles which were once shewed forth to the view and conviction of the world.

Sect. 8. We see this truth, and how clearly it is witnessed from what hath been held forth, *That the confirmations of the last times are greater than those of the first,* and 'tis more easie now to believe, and be perswaded of the certainty of the Scripture, than in the days when such extraordinary signs and appearances of God were held forth to his Church. I know this will seem strange, and by some be questioned how it can be a truth, that there should be now more advantage to believe the Word, and we accountable for the improvement.

ment of a larger seal and witness thereto, than in the days of the Apostles and primitive Church; before whom such undeniable Miracles were wrought. But let us also consider, 1. What great things of the Scripture have this day taken place, and are disclosed in the events which then were hid from their eyes; and as we have that advantage of all which from the Lord was brought to confirm his truth in these times, and may recur thereupon, with the same certainty as if we had seen them: O what a marvellous seal hath been since added, which former times did not know.

2. As it is sure none can deny a greater light hath now broken up to the Church, than what was in former Ages, and since the first times of the Gospel. That there hath been a continued finishing of the mysterie of God in the Scripture, the performance whereof is the great intent of Providence; so is it also clear what a further revealing and bringing to light hath been therewith of his deep counsels there, which is the peculiar work of the Holy Ghost. 3. Is it not now manifest, the time of that Promise *Dan. 12.4,* is come, for some greater discoveries of these truths which then were sealed up, when they

shall not run in vain who are on this blessed scent, to know what the Word is bringing forth for the Church; yea, that it is such a day when some great Scripture-truths are near the height and full period of their accomplishment, and therewith a more remarkable piece of the work of God than former Ages have known; for which, whatever present darkness, now we have sure ground to believe that the *brightness of the second coming of the Lord*, 2 Thes. 2. 8. by which the man of sin shall be utterly abolished, is in some measure begun, and so much thereof seen as may be an earnest in our hand of what we believe and wait for before the end.

4. Such an advantage is this day beyond the best of former Ages, that we may see what length the course of the Gospel, and of the Church-Militant, is now come; and how far the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled; which if it were not thus verified in the event, how hard should it be to believe a truth so contrary to all humane appearances.

Sect. 9. Thus it doth manifestly appear from the fore-going demonstration, that these are not more wonderful truths we are now called

called to believe, which seem at a distance so strange and astonishing; than such we certainly know, and have seen with our eyes accomplished; nor are the objects of our Faith, that the Scripture is yet to bring forth, more great, and above Natures understanding, than these which are the objects of sense, and thus before us in the event; if we could seriously consider, i. What concerns the Jewish Restauration; a Truth that seems so hard for many to believe how this should take place, for that dead Womb yet to bear, and these dry bones live which for so many days have lain at the graves mouth, is indeed a marvellous thing! But what do we see? and is accomplished about that people? Is it not also demonstrative of God, and of his marvellous power in the way of Judgment, as this is of the Sovereignty of his Grace? I mean, that continued stroke of judicial blindness and obduration they are now under, amidst such clear evidences of the truth, which none possibly could resist, if that veil were not over their mind, the Apostle speaks of, and their reason and understanding under a visible restraint; so that if these be considered what now hath taken place, and we are yet called to

believe, is it not most clear, the one is no more strange and astonishing than the other. We believe a pouring out of the last plague upon Antichrist, which shall overturn his Seat and Kingdom ; for this is expressly foretold : But is it not evident, that nothing here is more strange, and above humane appearances, than what this day is certainly seen of the truth of the Scripture, in his revealing the manner of his appearance, that height of his power and prevalence over the Saints, yea what is already begun and fulfilled of his downfall ; which are Truths that I may say once seemed no less amazing to the Church at a distance; than the utter abolishing of that adversary, looks to us this day. 3. It is a special part of our Faith for things yet to come, that ere long there will be a parting with time, and then shall we enter into an estate of everlasting blessedness, which is a great Truth ; yea so great, that it may be strange how easie some can find the believing of such a thing from joy and wondering thereat ; but what do we see, and have brought near our senses to confirm the Scripture ? Is it not something no less wonderful, that by the power of the Gospel so many are entered out of darkness into,

into a marvelous light, which is really another world ; yea such an estate that riseth higher above the condition of men by nature, than that glorious condition of the Saints in heaven is now above theirs, who are yet journeying towards it ; for the difference of the one is but in degree, but the other in kind. 4. We believe this day the Resurrection of the dead, and an undoubted accomplishment of that great Truth, which to natural reason would seem a strange contradiction ; but should we not consider, that the same truth, though in a spiritual way, yet most visibly and upon an higher account is verified before our eyes ; how it is sure, such are quickened and brought to life, who were dead in their sins, were past feeling, yea for so many years have lain as in a cold grave, without sense of God or their own case, who in one moment, at the voice of the Word, have been made to stir and arise ; and is not this something as discernible above nature, or the influences of second causes, yea as marvelous an act of divine power, as the Resurrection of the body in the last day, which seems so dark and strange a thing for many to believe. 5. We wait also according to the promise for the se-

cond coming of the Lord, that this last piece of Canonick Scripture shall assuredly be disclosed in the event, when the Lord himself will descend from heaven with the voice of the Arch-Angel, and the trump of God, before whom these visible heavens shall pass away with a noise, the elements melt with fervent heat, and the earth be burnt up ; for these are things which must shortly come to pass : but it is sure, nothing in all this is so marvelous or great, as what hath come to pass, when we now know, that God was manifested in the flesh, which is so marvelous a performance of the Scripture, that after this mens hearts can have no shadow for fear, or distrust of the bringing forth of all that remains, there being this day so much in our hand, that we know the greatest Truth in all the Bible hath already taken place.

Sect. 10. Thus is that marvelous discovery made clear before us, how great a thing the Scripture is, *whose words are seen to be works*, and not the notion or *idea* of things only, but such as have a real being and substance ; yea such that their speaking and doing is truly one and the same ; if we could consider, i. How these are words to

to be felt by the Soul, and as truly suited thereto, as for our eyes to read them; which have not only a sound to the ear, but are sweet to the taste, yea such as each of the Saints from experience can say, *thy words were found, and I did eat them, and they were the rejoicing of my heart, Jer. 15.*

16. 2. We must say, no words like these were ever written since the beginning of time, which can take life and root in the Soul, yea does it as really as the seed doth in the ground, and are fitted to be ingrafted and innaturalized there, so as no coalition in nature, betwixt the graft and the tree, can be more real than this, *Jam. 1.21.*

3. These are words where the things promised, though hoped for, and to come, have even then a present being and subsistence in the promise, *Heb. 11.1.* yea, such are they, that it can be truly said, if a Christian have the promise, he hath the mercy.

4. We know they are such that can at once both speak the Christians peace, comfort, and strength to them, and convey it, yea in that very moment effectuate what they say. 5. Is it not clear also, they are not more visibly written in the Bible, than they are sealed upon the Soul of a Christian, and what may seem most wonder-

ful there of the workings, breathings, strengthenings, teachings, and witnessing of the Spirit, are found to be so many undoubted realities turned over again in a practical history. Oh! what a book is this; which men, if they shut not their eyes, might see the living God only could frame; where two impressions are oft made discernible at once, the one of words and syllables by the Printers types upon paper, but the other of life and power by the holy Ghost, by whom these are made living words, so that the truth of grace, the breathings of God on his people, his felt presence, and that near fellowship they are admitted to with him, may be seen to be nothing else but some part of this second impression of the Bible.

Sec. II. Such are the wondrous works of God, wherein the Scripture is verified before us, as clearly shews, *his name is near*, and how sensible an approach there is this day of it to the Church, *Psal. 75. 1.* How this is to be understood, some things would be previously considered, 1. That it is a truth verified to all, since there can be no possible distance from him who fills heaven and earth with his presence, such is

is the immensity of his essence. 2. He is near in a more special way oft to his people, when they are not aware, and can discern no evidences thereof, *Job 9. 11, he goeth by me, and I see him not.* 3. It is known also, such solemn and sensible approaches of God there are, which no words can express; yea hath been in that manner witnessed to some, that it might be judged not fit to communicate to others, it should seem so strange what they have certainly known of this. 4. It is clear, the most demonstrative evidence of such a truth, is in these great events of the Scripture, and that there is it the holy God causeth his Name and Attributes pass by before mens eyes with so visible a discovery of himself as is suited to awake the sleeping world, and call them up to an awful regard of his being so near. But oh how little serious advertence is to this, and to these immediate appearances of the Lord, in verifying his truth, a sight from which most of this generation do flee; yea how much is lost, even by the Saints, of these choice confirmations they might have thereof, through their not being more in an habitual frame to observe; but to evince the certainty of this blessed truth,

and

and how near this his name is by a most sensible demonstration to the experience of the Saints in all ages; These sure and known remarks I shall instance, 1. How it hath not been more discernible his speaking to them in the promise, than that himself also hath done it, and hath given the performance in their hand of that very word whereupon he had caused them to hope, *Ps. 119. 49.* yea thus so near an approach of his name, that as they knew a sensible and strengthening influence on their hope to hold by the Word, when no appearances were of its taking place; now they see and are sure of the return with that convincing discovery, *This is our God, we have waited for him, Isa. 26. 8.* 2. It is clear, there is none of the Saints but in some measure know what it is to have their *Bethel*, where with *Jacob* they could say, *surely God was there;* and have found that upon so near an approach as hath made both the time and place remarkable through all their life, *Hos. 12. 4.* 3. It is known also these Providences do occur where an extraordinary appearance of God, and of some visible appointments from Heaven, like to *Hagars Well* in the Wilderness, hath been so clearly witnessed, as hath

hath caused a present fear as well as joy to some of the Saints; and with *Abraham's* servant to bow down and worship with wondering at so near an approach of his Name, *Gen. 26. 26.* 4. It is sure, there are palpable answers to prayer, the Saints have from Heaven, to witness *his Name is near*, which then brings a certainty and evidence therewith, of their being accepted; their suit taken in, a loosing of their bonds; yea, thus a communication of some divine thing to quiet the soul, which no words can possibly tell, what they have both seen and felt of so near an approach; *but surely God hath heared me*, saith *David*, *Psal. 5.* Is not his being near, then witnessed, when he openeth mens ears to discipline, and sealeth their instruction, that such a power and authority is found with their light, as forceth its passage down to the reins, and the hidden parts, to make them go bound in the spirit about their duty, and to hear that voice behind them, which saith, *This is the way, walk in it*; *Job 33. Isa. 30. 21.* I shall but add, that nothing can be more known, than that sensible retreat the Saints do find into this Name, when from outward pressures their soul hath been ready to sink, when

when thus it is set open to take these in, on whom all passages of relief from without have been remarkably shut; yea, thence such a light found to break up with that immediate conveyance of strength and support, that can only be understood by these that feel it, *Psal. 9.*

Set. 12. We have solid warrant for this, that so great a light doth result from the accomplishment of the Scripture, and these events wherein it takes place, as puts the *Angels in heaven* this day to the same study with us, to know by the Church the manifold wisdom of God, and what marvellous Providences are thus witnessed to his people; so that upon this account we know these excellent spirits who in that state of perfection behold the face of God; even these are at School with the Saints here, to see and admire his works and various dispensations about the Church, where his Faithfulness and Truth do so brightly shine forth, *Eph. 3. 10.* For it is clear, 1. Such are the depths of Providence, and the unsealing of the written Word, which is the alone work of the Mediator, and under his hand, as goeth beyond the wisdom of Angels, which they see and regard with wondering, but can-

cannot comprehend, 1 Pet. 1. 12. 2. It is
 sure these have a more clear sight, and with
 another kind of joy and delight look in
 on such events of the Scripture that con-
 cern the Church, than can be by any here
 reached in the state of Mortality: and
 thus have they a knowledg by experience
 and observation of the great works of
 God in the world. 3. Though such are in
 a glorified state, yet are they called to
 learn and have some new accession to their
 joy and knowledg, and which may be
 truly said, some further proficience by this
 marvellous study of the continued verifi-
 cation of the Word, how the counsel of
 the Lord takes place; yea, what a rare
 choice of means is to be seen for that end,
 how the contrivances of Satan, and all
 the Churches enemies are so directed, as
 to bring forth the contrary effects; and
 the temptations, straits, and down-castings
 of the Saints, made the very way and me-
 thod for their further raising: Thus also
 they see how marvellous a consent there is
 betwixt that infallible certainty of events
 from the determination of the Lord, and
 the liberty of second causes; and how
 small and contemptible means are made
 most subservient for some of his greatest
 works.

works. 4. It may be clear from the Word what special access these great Ministers of Providence, the Angels, have for this blessed study, to see and observe the Wisdom, Power, and Faithfulness of God, in their continued executing his Commands, and doing of his Will upon the earth; when 1. with a further light than can be known to us here, they do look in upon the whole conduct of humane affairs, and event of things in the world (in which their service is more than we are aware of); and there see how all is ordered in subserviency to the Scripture, and its taking place. 2. These do in a special manner regard the Assemblies of the Church, and the great appearance of God there; as is clear *1 Cor. 11. 10.* but how little is of this known or believed, that so near approaches thus are of the Angels, and their being present at the meetings of the Saints, where the Ordinances of Christ are truly dispensed. 3. Such a continued converse have these glorious Spirits with the Saints, in their care and oversight of them, that it may be truly said, they are not only helpers, but joint-observers with such, of the truth and tenderness of God, in the whole tract and conduct of Providence about them. It is

sure

sure the ministry of the Angels does in no times cease: and though it be not so clear from the Scripture, a proper deputation of some of these for each particular Christian; yet what joy and astonishing thoughts should it cause to consider that it is so evident ; these have a distinct charge and commission for every one of the heirs of salvation, to prevent such imminent hazards , when they are not aware thereof themselves, and see to their bodies as well their souls ; to go before them in such undertakings as are in the way of the Promise, for making them successful ; to rescue where ordinary means fail ; yea, to *hold them up as in their hands, that they dash not their feet against a stone?* Now in all these as it is clear how marvellously they concur and are at work with delight; so have they some further knowledg this way, by observing the unspotted faithfulness of God towards his people, yea thus are made partakers of their joy.

Set. 13. This one Inference more I must add from the preceding demonstration, How convincing and clear a witness there is to this great truth, of a *real energy* and *efficacious working* of the Spirit with the

M. Word,

Word, beyond any moral influence, or objective teaching thereof; and of Principles of grace immediately infused in the soul of a Christian, whence such are put forth to these acts and duties, that no improvement of natural abilities could ever reach. This is a Truth of greatest weight, which we see here so clearly evinced and proved, that I may say nothing possibly can be more to ensure the being and certainty of a thing than this; *the Scripture of God*, and *experience of the Saints*, that in all ages they have had of its verification, do in one witness most convincingly meet; for such evidence from the Scripture there is, as all may see an essay to expung these blessed Truths out of it, must have the same reach to bring the whole in question, they lye so close with its most substantial parts, and run as it were through all the veins and arteries of that blessed Record. And for the certainty of experience, with these discoveries on the Soul of a Christian thereof, in that manner they are known, as may make it no less strange to hear these brought in debate, than for a living man to be questioned about the truth of vital principles, without which he could neither act nor move. I am pres-
sed

sed to touch this, not only as it falls in on the road with the present subject of this Discourse, and that from so necessary a rise I could not now pass it ; but in a time also, when such essays are as have gone a further length than to oppose the power and spirituality of Religion in the practice, to attaque it in its Principles, and run down the notion thereof, as some imposture or fanatick dream, with which they would perswade us, the world hath been until this day cheated ; yea with a confidence as may shew what an hour it is on the reformed Church, when such come publickly forth, as dare offer to affront the God of Truth, in the most clear discoveries of his Word, by giving them the lye, and the Spirit of grace in his eminent workings on the Soul ; yea to scoff at all sensible intercourse betwixt Jesus Christ and his Church here upon the earth, in his manifestations and withdrawings, as the fumes of religious madness, or some ebbs and tides of the humours of the body. I confess, when at this rate they speak, none needs wonder at personal reflections, as with a strange height of insolence they shew in reviling some, whose repute and honour in the Church for the Truths sake is above their power to

darken. But what a time are we in, when Atheism so far out-goes its usual bounds, that it is not enough to get from the heart to the tongue, but it must be down at the pen, to deride the truth of godliness before others; some serious thoughts of which, could not be without a terror and awful impression on their hearts when alone with themselves; and now must it not only be the song of the Drunkards, but a matter of publick scoffing and sport by such who have the name of *Doctors* within the Church? It hath put me to a stand with astonishment, to think what they possibly can intend in their venting such Doctrines, which all may see is not to dispute, but to droll the world out of any settled persuasion of the Truth, and to persuade men to trust their own eyes no more for what they read in the Bible, nor their experience for what is most certainly felt and proved on their Soul; but conform, in the matter of Religion, to the mode and fashion of the times, as well as in their clothes: and to enforce this, some new and more effectual way must be taken, which I confess is such as former ages have but little known, to dictate Atheism and Blasphemy by Rule, and bring them with-

in the road of Divinity, and the Doctrine of the Church. One thing in this looks to me with the greatest terror, that sad account which this gives of the temper and complexion of the time; when it seems to be consulted as the way to gain repute for parts, and being masters of reason, to decry the power and life of Religion; yea in that manner, as if their alone interest in owning the name of Christians, were to have some more advantage for casting reproach on Christianity, and to weaken its awe on mens Soul: but it is well their design lies not in the dark, nor is the bait such as can cover the hook from the most ordinary observers; and though they bring another Gospel than what is delivered to us in the Scripture, which too manifestly may be evinced, yet is it under no such appearance as Angels from heaven. What I speak here is far from the least intended irritation or prejudice at the persons of any, against whom I know no interest or quarrel but one, which is for the truths sake, and that blessed name by the which we are called; having so enforcing a call to this, in pursuance of the present subject I now treat on from a Doctrine stated in such direct opposition thereto, and at this day thus pub-

lickly owned; which is this, "That Religion
 "is nothing else but what lies in Moral Vir-
 "tue, and a living up to the dictates of Na-
 "tures light ; yea no truth in the influences
 "and efficacy of the Spirit on mens Soul be-
 "yond the objective teaching of the word,
 "nor no inward principles of grace, a new
 "birth, or any reality of a spiritual life, but
 "what are the illusions of mens fancy; a Do-
 "ctrine were it now owned, and put in the
 Churches Creed, we might truly say with
 the Apostle, *then is the Christian faith in
 vain*, and hath been so in the most funda-
 mental Articles thereof, since there was a
 Church in the world ; yea then have all
 the Saints since the beginning of time been
false witnesses against God. I shall touch
 this but in a few words, since others more
 largely, and with much advantage to the
 Truth, have appeared therein ; these par-
 ticulars I only offer to be considered :
 How express and undeniable an oppofition
 is here, 1. To the written Word. 2. To
 the experience of the Saints in all ages of
 the Church. 3. To such clear demonstra-
 tive grounds of reason, as might enforce
 a conviction on the greatest Atheists,
 though the Scripture were laid aside.
 4. How visible the tendency of this Do-
 ctrine

ctrine is, to strike at the root and vital parts of Christianity, which all may see by undeniable consequence from it. 5. How obvious is it also that such must oppose their own light and conscience, in that reproach they cast on the truth, and these whom at so high a rate they challenge of Enthusiasm and Imposture, when the contrary is so known, that they can have no possible advantage for it, but by making lies their refuge.

For the first : Since it is clear, no other Scheme or Mould of Religion we can own, but from the Scriptures of God, let us but go in there and see what this is, and how express an opposition it stands in to such Doctrine as is now publickly vented ; which, as the scales of the balance, are such, that the one cannot possibly rise, but with the going down of the other ; when so plain and full the Scriptures witness is herein. 1. That it is an Evangelick holiness and no Legal that is now required under the dispensation of the Gospel ; and not a conformity only to the will of God in his Law, but also to the Image of God in his Son ; a Holiness that from him as the principle must be derived, and unto him as the pattern can only be

conformed, Rom. 8. 24, *Having predestinated us to be conformable to the Image of his Son;* nor is the writing of the Law in our heart to be understood, but as it is a *conformity to that law of the spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus.* This is the alone test, and no other we can know of Christian Morality, which if men shew not that stamp and superscription thereon, let their pretences be never so high, it is a counterfeit, and cast in a false mould, when brought to the Scripture, and before its light to be tried. And what a strange shape should these put upon holiness, to divide it from its alone fountain Jesus Christ, and the righteousness of the Gospel, without which it cannot possibly stand. The corruption of the excellentest things is found to be most noisom; and I am sure no contrivance could be beyond this, to turn so rare an antidote into poison; yea for what use should the Gospel be more, if Religion must all be summed up in a practice of Moral Virtue, and lying up to the dictates of Reason, according to the light of Nature, as we see now openly professed. 2. The Scripture expressly shews, that the Lord looks to mens actions in their principles whence they flow, and does accordingly judg-

judg thereof; and the tree must be good, else the fruit will be as the Apples of Sodom, for a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit, Mat. 7. 18; nor can these who are in the flesh please God, Rom. 8. 8. And what is more clear than the Scripture is here, that there are Principles of grace formed in the Soul of a Christian; an *ingrafting of the word* into the Soul, Jam. 1. 21. and a *real transforming into the same Image*, 2 Cor. 3. last v. a being made partakers of the divine nature, 2 Pet. 1. 4. Yea, is there not a writing of the Law in the inward man, whence there is a spiritual enlightning of the understanding, and effectual determining of the will unto objects spiritual, and supernaturally good? and if men will deny the truth of regeneration, and a new life formed in the Soul; yet can they deny, that these are the words of our great Master himself, *except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven*, and that it is written Job. 3. 3? Or debate such a Scripture there is, 1 Job. 3. 9, that shews a being born of God, and how these have his seed remaining in him; in which a change no less marvelous is thus wrought than if a transmutation should be of one nature

nature and kind into another. Why do not some prefix to their books, what they so visibly import, a refutation of the written Word, when their peculiar aim is to impugn its truth, and turn the great institutions of the Gospel into a cheat and imposture of Fanaticks. 3. Is not this the Doctrine of the Scripture, that *there is an evidence and demonstration of the spirit* with the preached Gospel; *1 Cor. 2. 4.* by which the same truths that are taught by men, are impressed and made effectual on the Soul; and that *the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power?* yea is not a most dreadful account given of such by the holy Ghost, and expressly foretold, *2 Tim. 3.4,* who having the *form of godliness*, should deny the *power thereof;* whatever length such a form may come in the material part of duties, and how plain a verification is of this, the world may see this day. 4. If men but read the Scripture, can they debate what of this truth is so clear there, that there is an in-being and union with Jesus Christ, *Joh. 16. 1, 2.* *Rom. 8. 1.* as the hid spring of all a Christians supplies, the principle of their spiritual enjoyments, without which mens furthest endeavours after holiness cannot possibly

possibly reach that end; since from him must *our fruit be found*, *Hos.* 14. 8. and how he is unto his people, not their *righteousness* only, but *sanctification*, *1 Cor.* 11. 4; -yea how straitly are these conjoined, a meritorious cleansing from sin by the blood of Christ, and that effectual cleansing from it by the Spirit, *Tit.* 3. 5? 5. This does the Scripture also clearly witness, that there is another key to open mens heart, than moral swasion; nor can mens *planting and watering* in the use of means do further, than there is a divine concurrence therewith to give the encrease, *1 Cor.* 3. 6. and how a physical and moral influence do both answer to produce one and the same effect, *Phil.* 2. 8: a revealing of *Christ in us* by the Spirit, as well as an objective revelation of him is to us in the Gospel; yea, how no constraint is put on the Saints, but what takes the true liberty of the soul in its consent with it, it being a *constraint of love*, *2 Cor.* 5. 14. *Cant.* 1. 4. 6. Is it not thus clear, that the same Authority which hath given a Rule for all moral duties in the Decalogue, hath commanded also the manner of their performance; and that no right worshipping of God can be, but in spirit and truth; yea,

yea, that such a reduplication should be in the act and doing of duty, to do it for the Lord, to give to a disciple as a disciple; and so labour, *That whether absent or present we may be accepted of him;* this also is shewed *Psal. 51. 6.* that it is *Truth in the inward parts* he especially regards; and was it not something else than the moral rectitude of an act, or its conformity on the matter to the Rule which gave the Widows mite such a preferenc, made that difference betwixt *Cain* and *Abels* offering? I shall but add this; If the quality of the Principle were not morally essential to an action, then *Judas's* sorrow might have been true repentance, which was so intense and real a grief.

2. As the express opposition of such Doctrine to the Scripture is undeniable; how manifest a contradiction is here also to the experience of the Saints in all Ages of the Church, who in these great truths have put to their seal, *That God is true;* wherein such fear not to make him a lyar. I need use but few words in speaking to this which at such length is held forth elsewhere; and where, I must say, none can seriously exercise Reason, but sees no possible fallacy or imposture can be here; but if

men

men must try their wit to undeceive the world from such a Cheat as some pretend this to be, and deny its truth because they are strangers to it themselves ; they will not think it strange that we cannot quit the Scripture, nor at once deliver up our Reason and Judgment ; yea, cannot so far contradict both sense and feeling, as to come over to their way : nor need such wonder, it is not easie to unteach the doctrine and substantials of Christianity, to these who know its truth upon their soul ; or perswade a living man that life and motion is but an illusion of his fancy : for with no less certainty do the Saints know these Truths, which now are so publickly disowned, 1. That a real intercourse betwixt Jesus Christ and the Soul is no imaginary thing, but such as they know to surpass all the delights men seek or can suppose in a wallowing in sensuality ; and, That then they are in no dream, but awake, and in the greatest composure of mind, when under his shadow they have sate, and his fruit was sweet to their taste, when his Name as oyntment was poured forth, and their heart made to melt within at their beloved's voice ; yea, when with the Church he hath taken them

them in unto more special retirements with himself, and there hath given them his love, *Cant. 7.9.* when his sensible embracements under some bitter afflicting Cross, hath been such as hath made them forget the smart and pain thereof. Oh where do we live? Is it in a Christian Church? thus to hear that inestimable love of Jesus Christ, and these blessed communications thereof to his people, brought by some to the Pulpit, and others to the Press, as a matter of publick scoffing and derision? Can it be said in the house of his friends, such indignity is offered unto him? But though these sport at such an appeal as they pretend some have made unto the Tribunal of God, it is like their confidence may fail to hold up at this rate, when it comes but near the drawing of their last breath; or to put such Religion in their Testament, which they fear not to put in their Books. 2. This assurance have all who know the truth, (oppose it who will) to own as a matter of experience, yea with that certainty, as they know the truth of any thing; That there is a real and sensible intercourse here betwixt the Word and the Soul, by communications of life, strength, joy, and light; and how this is no product of Enthusiastick

thusiastick fumes, but as they are a manifest seal and verification of the Scripture, so is the reality thereof as sure; yea how marvellous an up-breaking of light is oft found this way, to discover the wondrous things of the Word, which at other times are hid, and no more within their power, than to cause the Sun to shine when it is under a dark cloud.

3. It is the witness of the Saints, which from sure experience they know and give in to the truth; and being of a spiritual life, as that which no less sensibly is demonstrate, than that men have life and being by nature; which though it is not by birth, nor hath a rise from natural causes, yet hath its vital acts and proper operation as really put forth, as the acts of breathing and moving are by a living man; a life that hath peculiar delights and enjoyments suited to its own nature, such as have not the least affinity with the flesh; yea, a life with as real communications and influences both of light and strength from above; as it is sure our bodies are influenced with the warmings of the Sun. Some may take the confidence to deride this (as now this way seems an advantage in such an age), when a prophane drollery gains

gains more than the most solid demonstrations of truth ; and no such effectual mean consulted, as that to gain repute : but I may with some more confidence say, if these knew what is the Christians evidence of the reality of such a Truth, and what they live and feed on, and truly enjoy, where the world can be no witness ; this mirth should cease, and debate about the solidity of Religion, or scoff at those who are most in earnest about it.

4. It will be too hard a work for men, to dispute a Christian out of these sensible tastes of acceptance and peace with God, the joy of his presence, and their being impowered to approach unto him, with the liberty of the Spirit of Adoption, who at other times know the sad restraints and bondage their backslidings hath put them in ; nor will it be easie to shake such about the certainty of Gods being the hearer of prayer, and his giving answers thereto upon their soul, before they have got them in their hand ; whoever knew the truth of serving him in the spirit. I confess such a stated Controversie may seem above ordinary reach, for some thus to come forth and perswade these who see with their eyes, that their sight is but

an illusion of the fancy; and what they really hear, is but in a dream; there being no such thing as a visible object or audible sound: and yet this must pass for Fanaticism, that we cannot be forced or hectored out of it, which the Christian Church hath known, and all the Saints experienced since the time of *Abel* the righteous; but we fear not to own such a challenge. 5. I must say, they are far from respect to Enthusiasm, or any impulse not according to the Rule, whose experience can witness that truth of their being instructed of the Lord by a strong hand, and his following light on the soul with most discernible power and authority, for some piece of work and service he hath called unto; for this they own, and only know in the way of the Word, even when in some more than ordinary way, they are forced to see he teacheth as no man can do; and how easie he can make their work to follow, when he goes before to lead, with so sensible an up-breaking of strength as is found therewith.

3. What a visible repugnancy to *Reason* is here, though men should reject Scripture and the experience of the Saints, when

so much is to inforce by a rational demonstration on all, who never knew the power and efficacy of grace, and energy of the Spirit on their own Soul, That here is no false shew or deceit ; these being so clear, as they can be hid from none.

I. How the cause must be certain, and no counterfeit, where its peculiar and proper effects are so real and known to be such, as from no other cause could be produced ; such as to make a divorce visible betwixt mens Soul and what once was as their right eye, and move with a native unconstrained motion, to that from which they had before the greatest natural aversion ; yea to cause a satisfied choice of the Cross and reproach of Christ, before all the pleasures of the earth ; so that they are found to rejoice in tribulation, and when they are weak, to know the greatest income of strength : and must it not be a divine supernatural power that can dispose the heart into a most discernible tenderness and melting at the Word, where no natural softness of spirit could be alledged for this, and cause them tremble with a surprising terror upon their spirit at the hearing of these Truths which they formerly made sport at ? It is sure, such

such an effect also cannot be hid from the world, how real a transforming of the Soul of a Christian there is by the power of the Word into the same image and likeness, which is an effect could no more be the product of moral swasion, than he who paints a mans face could put life in such a dead image. 2. If there be no truth and certainty of infused Principles of grace, and real efficacy of the Spirit; it is then clear, the most observable fruit and progress of the Gospel should follow the greatest advantage of gifts and objective helps; when nothing is more obvious, even to Reason, than the contrary of this, how *the kingdom of God is not in word but in power*; and that the simplicity of the Gospel, and *foolishness of preaching*, as the Apostle calls it, is seen to exceed all humane eloquence; yea, how the most polisht discourse, and greatest strength of Reason, does often make but weak preaching with the least real efficacy: And here none can deny, what in all times hath been so obvious a remark of a change by grace wrought on some, where the world might see no ordinary means, no company, no example, nor any usual way for instruction could be subservient for it, to witness

there is an immediate teaching of the Lord.

3. It is convincingly obvious to reason and sure, how there is an unseen power put forth upon the Conscience, in giving it a wound, for which the furthest improvement of natural helps or moral swasion can find no cure ; yea such a woand is this sometimes seen to be, as no rack or outward torment is comparable thereto, which no reason then can allay, or the most convincing Arguments and Proposals of the greatest comforts in the world, but grows upon them the more they strive with it; when in one moment its relief from another cause is found to come, and oft such a cure as is no less marvelous and demonstrative of some higher power above Reason to work this, than the wound it self, which all may see is something men cannot speak, nor humane arguments inforce ; but whatever word may then be made use of, it is an immediate commmunication from Heaven of light and joy therewith on the soul, that makes it effectual. This is too sad a Truth for men to sport at, who have no security from his hand, that in all Ages have let the world know what the power of the Conscience is. 4. I am sure none can be in the dark with such

such a discovery, That something there is above Morality, or any external helps, as to the truth of a judicial *Induration* on the soul, when thus, as the Word shews, it is so visibly seen, how many have got beyond the reach of means, yea discernibly preacht worse, more deaf and dead under the greatest advantages this way, whereby others are enlivened ; men cannot but know no outward cause is here, nor is it so rare a sight this day within the Church, to bring it in question how light and conviction (yea, when all that moral helps can possibly do, is put forth to the full) are yet seen to resolve in a further rage and malice against the truth, to shew it is an immediate stroke from God for mens abuse of light ; and whence the wound is, there only can the cure be expected. 5. Though no access should be to convince from Scripture, yet if such great Pretenders to Morality will admit, that in some case the Moral certainty of a thing can be so far evinced, as to the fullest satisfying of the mind , then it is sure , nothing possibly can be more than is here, to shew it's no dream or imposture for which so great a witness is given, from those whose truth and moral integrity their adversa-

ries must confess, and fear not to credit in any personal interest; nor will they debate their judgment and capacity to discern of things as well as others (lest they should bring their own in question), and that from outward gain or incitements this way, such have no cause to be acted; nor is this a witness from some few, and in one age, or in a corner of the earth, but is the known record of the Church since the beginning of time, and of such who have been ready at all times to render *a reason of this hope within them*, yea appeal to the trial of others, even of their greatest adversaries, to come and see if the efficacy of grace, the inward workings of the holy Ghost upon the Soul, and that truth of a spiritual life, be any false shew; and is not the world forced to observe with what composure of Spirit, and with their dying breath, when on the nearest approaches to another life, these fear not to attest this, and go in bearing that testimony before the Tribunal of God?

4. I offer here to be considered, what such Doctrine as is now spread, evidently implies, and whither it tends by undeniable consequence, should it be received

ceived in the Church ; when thus, 1. We must look after some other Bible, than the written Word ; nor can its authority have any weight, as that which is *regula regulans*, when in so express terms the Christian Faith and the truth of all supernatural Revelation is here called to the Bar of Natures Light and the Dictates of mens Reason, to be owned or cast, as it answers thereto, which thus so expressly is owned as the alone Standard to regulate the whole both of Faith and Obedience. 2. May not all see, its not at the uppermost boughs, but at the root that such Doctrine strikes, to subvert mens Souls in that greatest Truth of the *use* and *efficacy* of Grace ? yea what a length they run beyond *Pelagius*, or the *Arminian* Doctrine, who do not professedly deny all *efficacious* working of the Grace of God, or its being a partial cause, though this they admit not antecedaneously and independent on the will, but eventually, because of its concurrence therewith ; but here is the very being and operation of Grace, and of all real influences from God on the Soul at once cut off, except what some would restrict as miraculous to the first times of the Church. 3. Then should there be

no other operation ascribed to God, if this be admitted, for the begetting an increase of faith, than what is given to the ministry of men, by moral swasion, and in effect the same kind of efficiency to such as plant and water with him who giveth the increase. We deny not this honour have instruments, to co-operate with him in their own sphere: but what horrid blasphemy should it be, to put such in the same sphere of working and efficiency with the Glorious God? 4. Is it not clear, how thus that great relation of the Mediator, as the influential Head of his Body, which is the Church, and his governing by the Scepter of his Spirit, is here wholly made void; yea thus no use of prayer for spiritual influences, or to look up to heaven for our being strengthened in the inward man; and why do not these fasten their reproach also on the Churches Liturgy, for so gross a cheat in the publick Worship of God, which in effect they declare this to be that men should pray for the *gracious assistance of the spirit*, and to be *illuminate from above*, when this only is the effect of an Enthusiastick spirit. 5. And does not the admitting such Doctrine most expressly infer

infer, that *Enochs* walking with God, *Jacobs* wrestling by prayer, and these sensible returns he had thereof, *Abrahams* believing against hope, and all appearances of reason, with these frequent changes of *Davids* inward case, which we read in the *Psalms*, were but the illusions of fancy, and no use for such a record in the Word this day to the Church. I shall but further add, how strange a Doctrine is here, that makes void the whole intent of the Gospel, and scorns to take heaven at so low a rate as upon the account of grace, but must carry it by triumph, and for this will leave the Scripture, to find some new passage, since they cannot go in the same road, for being saved with such they so much hate and despise.

5. Let it considered, what possible advantage these can pretend to fasten such reproach on the Protestant Doctrine, and these who adhere to it, (against whom they thus appear), of Enthusiasm, or its detracting from respect to Morality, when they know, and upon their Conscience cannot deny this witness, that such, i. Own no impulse or internal motions which are not according to the Rule, but that it is before

before this light they offer to come, and to his decision who speaks to men by the written Word ; If these discoveries, influences and efficacious workings of God on the Soul, which their experience do witness, be not such as they ought to seek and look after, by express Scripture-warrant. 2. How these also are in greatest earnest both to discover and guard against the appearance of Enthusiasm ; and to keep others off from splitting upon any such Rock ; nor can it be hid, what is their standing witness against it. 3. It is strange, with what confidence they can own this challenge of their decrying the vigorous improvement of our natural faculties, and want of respect to Morality, who own the Doctrine of the Gospel ; when they know none press more a practical conformity to the Law, with these engagements that the freedom of the grace of God puts upon men thereto ; but this we confess, and must witness with grief, that the Morality of some Heathens puts to shame the professed Piety of many Christians in this age, whose walk gives too visible an advantage to question if there be a truth in Religion, when so much imposture is found under this cover. 4. It is

is sure, this can be from no want of light, so publick a decrying of the Doctrine of Grace ; which is turned this day in fashion ; when it is so clear , nothing is thence to make the Law less strict, or sin less odious ; but that here are the strongest inforcements to holiness, and its peculiar intent known to teach us *to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts* ; yea, how thence are the clearest inferences for this, that such who have *these precious promises* *should cleanse themselves, &c.*

I must shut up this with an answer to two Queries , that sometime have lookt to me with a strange astonishment ; The one is, That no error in the judgment so gross or monstrous is found to break up, but does still prove in some measure contagious, and wants not followers within the Church. The other is, what can influence so strange a prejudice and opposition at the Doctrine of Grace, and Righteousnes of the Gospel , as is at this day , that men should be found to take so sad a revenge upon themselves, from pure malice at so excellent a Truth ; when it is sure, these do not think to inforce their Doctrine by a convincing witness of such heights of Morality in their practice,

as

as they contend for by their pens; but is too obvious, how far in this they comply with the temper of a loose time, to subvert in so far the Christian Religion, that they may have none at all. For the first of these, it needs not be strange if we consider, First, That no error in the judgment, but is a work of the flesh, and a most natural suiting thus betwixt a false way and a corrupt heart. 2. Since the greatest contempt of God, which men can witness, is their not receiving the truth when it is clearly offered; it is not strange that a delivering up of their Reason and Judgment unto strong delusions, should be made to answer thereto, which is certainly one of the greatest strokes from God inflicted here. And is it not clear how these strong incitements from the Devil, with the power and energy thereof, are more observably witnessed upon the mind, than upon the affections; yea, such monstrous productions are this way, as may be more demonstrative of his immediate and mighty working on the soul, than the most horrid acts of prophaneness: Thus also the world may see, 'tis the acting over the same Scheme, though new Actors are brought forth; and in what a round and circle

circle delusion moves, and how old antiquated errors are seen to rise and spread, which former times seemed to have buried. For the other Query, How so strange an opposition is this day found against the Gospel, and the righteousness thereof, none needs to wonder, when it's so clear, first, That the Law suits more naturally to men than the Doctrine of the Gospel. Secondly, That there are degrees of opposition to some points of truth as they are more for the Glory of God and promoting of his Interest; and therefore is it not strange, so great an assault is here to poyson this fountain. 3. What can be more clear, than that account the Apostle gives to resolve this, *Rom. 9. 32*, in their case who withheld then the righteousness of faith; *for they stumbled at that stumbling-stone*; and therefore does the Holy Ghost call it, *a submitting to the righteousness of God*, which to Nature is as a bowing down below that grandeur and glorying in it self, which it cannot endure to give.

C H A P. V.

A Third particular upon this Subject, is some serious enquiry into these grounds, Why among these who profess godliness in this Age, a through and solid confirmation in the truth is now so rare, and their perswasion of it, so little proportioned to the greatness of that seal and attestation which is this day before them; for it is too manifest, which the way of most within the Church doth witness, how doubtful and fluctuating that reliance they have on Scripture-truths is, as a thing that lies in opinion, and probable conjectures, more than in any degree of certitude. I confess it is the peculiar work of the spirit to open the eyes, and enlighten the soul by an effective illumination, and discover to us the evidences of divine truths; nor can the proposal of the object with the greatest certainty of evidence, or by any moral reasoning, cause men discern spiritual things spiritually; since there must be a supernatural light, and suiting of the visive faculty to the object; but is it not clear also, how much the obstruction and culpable cause is on our part,

and

and we can only blame our selves why such a price for wisdom is put in mens hands, and no heart to improve it : some few of these *causes* I shall here instance, the ignorance whereof keeps us from a Cure, because the Disease is so little known.

Set. 1. Christians do but little reflect upon their own experience, to know what it means, nor have their conceptions any proportion to the greatness of these truths that are before them, which is one special cause why so much is given to establish and strengthen, and yet so unanswerable an improvement for this end ; but what is to be understood here by serious reflexion, I must say, seems a rare exercise to most who profess godliness in this time : 1. To bring near their thoughts to the truth, for getting another sight thereof than they formerly had, and their spirits more deeply impressed with so great an import of these things which are freely given them of God ; how they are no shadow nor appearances of things, but most visible realities. 2. To have such a returning of the soul upon it self, as to question over again the certainty of these Truths which are thus made out by experience, yea, as at a stand how to credit their own eyes therewith,

with, they are so marvellous and great; thus was it with *Solomon*, 2 Chron. 6. 18, *But will God in very deed dwell with men upon the earth?* And such was the exercise of that poor woman after so strange a surprisal of Providence, Gen. 16.13, *Have I also looked after him who seeth me!* Is this the Lord? And do my eyes truly see what I see in so great a mercy? O what a choice and confirming exercise should this be, when a Christian can thus sit alone, and reflect on their experience; It is sure I exercise reason, I am not asleep but awaking; and herein know I am not deceived, that there is a spiritual life and immediate fellowship with God here, and that I know whom I have believed; yea, except I contradict my sense as well as reason, I am sure, with that God on whose word I lean for eternal life, I have been oft sensibly refreshed, and found that in his company which no words can express.

Sect. 2. There is this *Cause* may be seen, The very aims and proposals of Christians are so low, and their enquiry not suited to such a warrant as they have John 16. 24, *To ask that their joy may be full:* But these

these great confirmations of the truth which the Saints have oft had, and yet are communicable in the way of the Word, seem by most of this generation to be laid by as some extraordinary things ; which doth clearly witness, 1. An unacquaintedness with the Scripture, and the extent of many Promises there, with which Christians thus are allowed to trade, for getting up to more high degrees of peace, comfort, and assurance of the truth, than most have either a heart to seek, or faith to credit : O what a depth this is, that will never be fully opened up, until we be in Heaven, what it is to have the written Word so near, and what this might be to a Christian here by the way. 2. This shews how little a further growth in the faith of assent is known, and that giving all diligence to the full assurance of hope, as that with which our growth in love, patience, humility, is indissolubly linked, and keeps a proportion. 3. There is little coming up to that practice, where such great things from the Lord have been shewed to his people in former times ; *Our fathers trusted in thee, and were helped, Psal. 22.3.* These had indeed a maryellous seal, and rare confirmations of the truth, which seem strange

to us ; not that they were out of the way of the Promise, but because the ancient holiness of these times is so little known. How rare a practice is it to believe, to follow the Lord fully, and have a large venture in his hand, and what such a wrest-ling, and supplication with weeping, that is *Hos. 12. 4.* by which they had power with God, and did prevail ; and therefore are many rare mercies withheld from us, which lye hid in the Word.

Sect. 3. It may be seen, how easie an assent most find to the great Fundamentals of the Scripture ; and the Church is no less ruined this day by Credulity, than professed Atheism; which is too evident a cause why so many know not what it is to believe, or be concerned about such a thing, for thus they take all on trust, are carried in the crowd, not disquieted with these assaults a serious Christian is oft pressed with ; yea, come not that length to question the certainty of the ground whereon they build, if it be not to unsettle themselves more than to confirm. Oh ! what a sad sight may this be, when it is no less than the venture of an immortal Soul for eternity, about which if men be deceived, they are deceived

deceived indeed; and it is not seen, what a fatal conjunction oft is betwixt credulity and imposture; where the deceiver and such as find it easie to believe, meet together in the same road.

Sect. 4. Though from reason there is a sufficiency of evidence to convince, yet is it clear, that something farther is indispensably required for a firm assent to the truth; which is to know the truth and reality of the Gospel by experience on the Soul; for without this there can be no cure for Atheism, nor can it be known there is a truth in that Religion they profess, when within themselves there is such a contradiction to it; it is indeed strange, what assent these can give to the supernatural Truths of the Word, which though nothing is more sure in it self, yet from them is a false witness, in so far as it is against their own knowledg, whilst their Conscience must say, the Scripture was never that to them, that it declares it self to be, and that witness which it bears of the life of the Spirit, the earnest of heaven; an immediate fellowship with God, and that the preached Gospel is the power and wisdom of God, was yet never to them a

reality, but as herein they confess God to be true, they make themselves lyars, and contradict their own light.

Sect. 5. Is not this visible before us? How Atheism is now turned contagious beyond the rate of former times; and seems to be the great assault peculiarly suited to this age, where the power of darkness most appears; a time when that design was never more on foot to have the Truth kept doubtful, that it be more a problem, and matter of opinion, than of certainty, and so much endeavour to cast reproach on the way of the Lord; yea, a time when there is a sore shaking by contrary Doctrine, the growth of scandal, and obvious blots on the profession of godliness, so that many are in hazard to resolve their Faith in an uncertainty of all principles, and clearly lose any assured persuasion of the truth of Religion; but as this is witnessed, and one of the sad appearance of the time, it gives solid ground also to hope. 1. For a further establishment Christians shall be led up to before this generation pass. 2. That some great discoveries and confirmations of the truth are yet to break up, and such a brightness,

ness, that will be as marvelous as the strange darkness over the Church hath been; and that the Atheism of this age shall have a cure, though we may fear in some sharp and extraordinary way, when ordinary means for this end have been so ineffectual.

Seſt. 6. Is not here too evident a cause, whence so much dark and fluctuating assent is to the truth, when such confirmations of its certainty are in our sight; they are few who find it a great business to be eternally saved, and have their soul kept under such a weight, to whom the thoughts of a heaven or hell are brought near, as undoubted realities, betwixt which there is no middle state after death, but knows they must shortly be the inhabitants either of the one or the other; for if such a deep impression of this were on mens Souls, could they possibly be so unconcerned in their being sure of the foundation whereon they have so great a venture. Such are indeed a rare sight in this age, whose working out their *Salvation is with fear and trembling*; and most so far seem to be lost in a throng of other things, that this greatest question which can occur

in all their life, *If they be born again?* is laid aside until they be ready to dye. Oh! hath our light thus put us out of seriousness, and giving all diligence, which is so indispensibly required of these who mind heaven; will gifts, and a high repute in the Church, or a fair shew in the flesh, be a sure evidence to cause rejoicing, when once it comes to dye? This is a sad subject, and I must say, If these characters of godliness the Scripture hath given were seriously pondered, there was never an age wherein more professors are like to come short of heaven, and be found in a fundamental delusion about their state than this is; for which some sad evidences I shall here offer:

First, That loose conception many have got of Religion, which they have framed in their own mould, so as to find an easie cure for all their doubts, and shift off the necessity of fear, tenderness and diligence in making sure of eternal life, and thus are at work to have such a latitude in their principles, as may suit the strait and narrow gate which leadeth to life unto that liberty they take in their practice. 2. May we not see how far it is become a matter of wit and invention to be Christians, and with

with what singular advantage many have learned to act handsomly such a part ; as if Divinity were rather a Science to be learned by rules of Art, than a matter of sense and feeling, or some exquisite image to please their eye , but such as can put forth no vital acts. 3. Are not these times such, wherein light hath in a strange manner out-gone Conscience, and tenderness, and that which the Apostle calls the form of knowledg, and of truth is like to ruine many, *Rom. 3.* So that it is rare to find a warming heat with a large profession, such as can make it convincing to others, and commends it to their conscience. 4. It is now a time wherein Religion is remarkably enlarged in the notion, but oh how much abridged in the practice, even from what it hath been in times of greater ignorance. I must say, that length many in this age have come in the *Theory* of practical godliness, is like to be a sad snare to help some to perish with the more confidence and quiet, 5. It may be too obvious, there hath not been an age of the Church wherein professors seemed further off from getting good of the Gofpel, and less access to reprove, or for a faithful freedom with most, than is now ;

but such is the sore and disease of many, as cannot endure to be touched, and therefore it is no wonder that God should make so sharp an application by the rod, of that which men will not apply to themselves from the Word, or bear from others. 6. How sad an evidence of this time is it, when the Religion of so many may be seen to have begun at their practice, before it once began at the heart, and thence is it so easie to be Christians in company, and in publick duties with others, who know little what it is to be such alone, and be serious in these more retired exercises of Religion, which keeps the closest communication with the vital parts of Christianity; but it is sure, the greatest part of a Christians work is that which is least seen, and hid from the eyes of others. 7. It may be said, there hath not been a time wherein more were like to perish at an *almost* in Christianity, and with hid reserves in their heart in a professed following of the Lord, than is now; and that there is a right hand and right eye, which ere men who profess the truth adventure to quit, they will rather hazard all, whence is there such a darkening of light, and extenuating

tenuating controversies in a suffering time, when it may be seen, it is not so much a matter of dark difference as the scruple lies at the cross in general, that for such a step in the narrow gate they must have an exception.

8. I shall but add this very sad evidence of the hazard of professors in this Age, That many are like to please themselves with such a mould of Piety as cometh short of Moral righteousness; and lay aside that observance of the second Table, which is so indispensibly required of all the followers of God. O! what an amazing thing is this! as if this were not an essential part of holiness, *without which none shall see the Lord*; and a part of these weightier things of the Law, which is to *do justice, love mercy, as well as walk humbly with God*; there is not under the New Testament a more dreadful threatening than against this, *I Thes. 4. 6, That no man over-reach his brother, for God is the avenger of all such, and hath that mark put upon it when it is found among such who profess themselves his people, that it overpasseth the deeds of the wicked, Jer.*

5. 28 ; yea, I must say, in nothing could
the height of malice against Jesus Christ
act more to bring the truth under re-
proach, and cause the profane world blas-
pheme, than for any to personate Religion
for a cover to such a practice.



CHAP.

C H A P. VI.

IN the last place, This great Truth of the verification of the Scripture would be considered as it leads *into practice*, and that singular advantage this way might be found, if we knew how to improve it; since this is a Talent for Trade, not for Contemplation; yea, it may be said with a sure warrant, This is the greatest in order to a Christians comfort and establishment which he can trade with within time; which in some following *Uses* I shall briefly touch.

Sect. 1. Thus should every one of the Saints pursue a certainty of his own about the truth, That the written Word is the testimony of the living God, which is indispensibly necessary for him to have, else he can have none at all; since this is a personal business, where all must prove their own work; for clearing of which, we we have to consider, 1. How rare and inestimable a thing this certainty which I call a Christians own, is to difference from what most of ordinary professors in these times satisfie themselves with. 2. How this way

way it is to be reached. As to the first, It is such, 1. That causeth one to rejoice within himself, and have a feast there whereof none else can partake, which hath no dependence on others, but is alone betwixt God and the soul. 2. It is such as should oblige him to seal the truth, though there were none else, and is sufficient to put his soul to rest in a satisfied reliance on the Word, though he have no incitement from the example of others, and be cast in a time wherein Religion is every-where spoken against. 3. Such a certainty is this of the truth as hath been tried by temptation, and hath not wanted a previous conflict ere they came by it; yea, lyes so near them, as to be a serious exercise on their soul to know the solidity of that ground whereon so great an Interest must be built; and thus the greater assaults there are, it is found the way to a further length in establishment. 4. It is such wherewith these are not easily satisfied who have once got it; but it is some part of their continued work to know the Lord, by following on to know him in his Faithfulness in the Word, that he is surely that to them which he hath declared himself to be; and what a visible impress there is of his truth in his

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Providences towards others. 5. This is such as brings unspeakable support in a dark case, and helps the Christian to rejoice in the Promise, when no appearances are how the performance should come, yea to a satisfied rowling over on God to reconcile his Word and Works when they seem to justle, and thus oppose what he hath said, to what he hath done; knowing these can be in no real contradiction to one another. 6. So excellent a thing is this certainty of a Christian's own; as leads into an unspeakable repose and quiet of the Soul in that last venture for eternity, when on the faithfulness of God in his Word he must lay the dead grip (which we see how dark a business it is to many) when thus so great and earnest he finds in his hands of these Truths, the accomplishment whereof goes beyond death, which are the resurrection of the dead, and a being for ever with God; that he knoweth these are the Promise of God, whose sensible presence, and familiar approaches to the Soul, a near converse with him, yea his very immediate help from heaven in a day of strait, he knows so well here by the way, to be a sure performance of the Word, and by marvelous

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confirmations thereof hath oft proved.

2. Let us consider, of what singular use these near approaches of a Christian to the Word, to know and be further confirmed of the faithfulness of God there in the Providences of his life, should be, for such a certainty : 1. That this is something not reached by any transient glances of light, or some present flash of affection; but here must be a solid and rational arguing from the evidence of the premises to the truth of the conclusion ; That since he is sure, *The way of the Lord is perfect, and his word tried, Psal. 18. 30.* which so oft he hath put to an essay, and in his experience had so many personal returns of its truth, he can of nothing be more certain, than he is of its being a safe ground for adventuring on. 2. Thus is the Lords Seal to his Truth made discernible, and such a secret token and mark given thereof, which none can counterfeit. 3. Thus is so enriching a trade to be followed, as might every day lay some new strengthening remarks in our way of the Lords being God, and his unspotted faithfulness in the Word, whereon we have so great a venture.

Sect. 2. There is this use which necessarily follows from the former, and a singular advantage Christians should make of the present subject, with these clear discoveries before them of the Scriptures verification, *for a through and solid determining their state in Christ*; and that thus they may get up to some higher degrees of assurance thereof, than what most satisfie themselves with. When to ease the Christians work in this trial, and in multiplying marks, here is a short abridgment of all he may have at his hand, to know the certainty of the Word, and these great supernatural Truths there, by experience on his own Soul; so as not in the dark, and with a doubtful assent, but from what he hath both seen and felt, he can put to this seal, *That God is true therein*. We know, until the Saints be fully possessed of heaven, nothing can bring a joy beyond this, *to be thoroughly assured of their being for ever there, and in his presence where there is fulness of joy*, they shall pass the long ages of eternity; Nor can any be too serious and concerned for making this sure; yet it cannot be denied, but some excess even here is this day in the road of practical divinity, and these

voluminous enlargements about signs and evidences of grace (in which much cautious respect needs to the various sizes and degrees of growth amongst Christians and vicissitudes of their inward case) yea, by extending these in so different a mould and shape, as hath tended to darken and render perplex the way to some more than for solid quiet of their spirits. The portraiture of a Christian is such, as none can draw to one model, but with respect to the infancy of some, as well as the further age and establishment of others. What I intend here, is a but short touch only for clearing this, how the Christians way and method of trial necessarily lies, in a serious pursuance to know the truth, and have more near converse with its verification on the Soul, as the best way to know their state, and clearing up of evidences for heaven; and how these are so closely linked, as the one must bring forward the other; for which some few things I shall first premise, that by most of professed Christians, I must say, seem to be little understood.

First, That there is none but in some measure must know a practical converse with the Word and its accomplishment,

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if they be not strangers to the very essentials of Christianity ; nor can there possible be a true idea and image of godliness impressed on the soul of any, but as it answers to the Scripture , and presents its lively impress thereon.

2. That these hid marks, whence the Saints know the Scripture to be the Word of God, are such as with the same evidence answer to determine their state and being in Christ ; yea such, that by looking in on inherent qualifications, none can solidly argue to the certainty of grace from them, further than they know the certainty of the Word , and its accomplishment on them. Now what singular advantage should a Christian thus find, when by this thread, as it were, in his hand, and so sure a rule and line of trial, he can follow his interest in Christ, and have the sight thereof kept clear by that undoubted interest and propriety he hath in the Word, from it's sure accomplishment to him ; the want whereof, is it not too obvious a cause of such darkness and confusion as attends many in these enquiries they have about their state.

3. Though it is undeniable that the World sees at a distance, and cannot get

by some convincing witness of the Scriptures taking place, both in providences of Mercy, and these clear Instances in which the Lord is known by the Judgment he executes ; yet do they not know, nor can possibly reach the Christians trade here, which lies hid and deep in the Soul, in that sensible converse these have with the Word, and its continued verification to them.

4. Doth not the word shew, what the Saints must know by experience, how close these keep together in one tye; as we see them conjoined, *Joh. 3. 33.* That such who truly *believe*, know also what a *putting their seal* to the truth is ; since they are not only convertible terms, in so far as the one cannot be wanting, where the other really is, but such that the certainty of the one must be cleared up by the other. I deny not, a dogmatical faith is in some measure reached when not saving ; but it may be clearly evinced, that no true solid assent is to supernatural truths, without experience and a knowing the power and efficacy thereof on the Soul ; nor can there be a fiducial application and recumbency on the truth, where this is wanting.

5. Though

5. Though it is too sadly known, as one cause of such dark evidence most have of their state, that the Spirit of sanctification runs so low, and untenderness in their walk; I must say, this also may be no less clear, which is so little solid perswasion of the certainty of the truth; and a sad mistake in the method most take, by seeking to secure a right and interest there, without a serious pursuance to be solidly founded thereon. And is not here the rise of such hæsitation, and a trembling gripe so many have in parting with time, and that great venture of the Soul on the promise; their work hath been so little by the way to have their adherence to the truth strengthened by *knowing in whom they believed*, which made it so easie to the Apostle to put over himself and interests on that security.

6. This seems to be little considered, in such enquiries some have about their inward state, and whether they believe or not; how it is much greater to believe the truth in general, than any personal application thereof can be in their case; for which the Apostle clearly reasons, *Rom. 8.32, He that spared not his own Son, how will he not with him give us all things?* for if we

be assured of that in which the greatest difficulty of faith lies, must it not by clear consequence follow, that what concerns our interest is but as a straining at a Gnat, when such a thing is once swallowed ; and where a Christian hath got this length, to believe the testimony of God is such whereon with greatest security he can repose his Soul ; personal evidences cannot then stay behind, if there be a serious endeavour in their essays after holiness. For the greatest wonder is here to believe the truth of the Gospel, that *he is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto him*, more than his saving of me ; and it may be too obvious as the cause whence the last is obstructed, from so small establishment in the first.

Having premised these, for clearing a Truth of such weight, I shall offer some things to evince the necessity of a near and practical converse with the Word in its accomplishment on the Soul, as that without which no effectual access can be to clearing up of evidences, and certainty of our state in Christ ; when it is so manifest, where this is wanting now can discern, 1: The *truth and solidity of grace*, how it is no casual thing, but such as most convincingly

vincingly answers the Word, and is its native product ; which if it be not discerned, the one half of a Christians evidence, from the *truth of holiness and fruits of the spirit* is then kept out of sight ; for whatever is seen of the being of grace in its *effects*, yet does he not see it in the *cause*, and how in that alone Channel of the Word and Promise its conveyance is to the Soul; yea without this could none comfortably reflect on the *things freely given him of God*, as knowing them to be such ; and on his own experience of the work and efficacy of the Spirit, if he cannot discern the clear making out of the Scripture there.

2. Without this could none know, what so rare and divine an art means, (than which I may say, in a mediate way, nothing can be of more use for trial of a Christian state), to compare *spiritual things with spiritual*, such as the actings and influences of the Spirit with the Word, inherent evidences with the written Promise ; nor according to this can he discern a divine efficacious concurrence meet him in the way of duty ; and how the *original* which is without in the Word, and its transcript within on the

Soul, are one and the same; for what are the rarest inward qualifications upon the matter, and how little should they amount to a clear distinguishing evidence, if this comparing work of a Christian be not known, how to set things one against another, so as each be under its proper aspect.

¶ 3. It may be clear, without this no other converse with the Bible could let a Christian know, what the *truths dwelling within him* is, or how much thereof hath been turned into a practical history, and in such a Character writ over upon his heart, that he is sure Angels nor men could never have done; nor can he see how the same *ingrafted* and living truth (by as sure a demonstration as ever was of the motion of the blood) makes its way through the veins and conduits of a Christians walk, for putting forth of vital acts there; in a right discerning of which, should that great demonstration be convincingly clear, that seems as a strange and dark thing to many, what it is to be the *declared Epistle of Christ, written not with ink, but the Spirit of the living God; not on tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart,* 2 Cor.

3. 3. ¶ 4. With-

4. Without this could none of the Saints see their right and claim to the Promise cloathed with the actual possession thereof; which is the earnest here of that inheritance above; but where this is clear, what a marvelous evidence comes therewith, to the furthest quieting of the Soul; when thus a Christian reflects, and can reason with himself, what of the Scripture and these great supernatural truths there, which the world knows not, he hath now made his *own*, and not in the offer and promise only, but in real performances.

5. Is it not clear, without some near and serious converse with the Scripture, in the certainty of its verification, none could know the Seal of the Spirit; which though sometimes it is so immediate and over-powering a testimony as silenceth all doubts and fears, when it hath no respect to any work of grace, or inherent evidences; yet even then it is *the Seal of the Spirit of the promise*, Eph. 1. 13, and such that cannot be understood, but as a sure accomplishment of the Word.

6. Let us but consider, what Christian-assurance is (I mean such as in a mediate way can be reached), and is it not a practical Syl-

logism, where the first Proposition must still be a Scripture-truth, and concludes from these sure and undoubted experiments they have thereof on their Soul? for thus a Christian solidly reasons; Can I debate more my being for ever in heaven with God, who do so certainly experience what the Scripture has given as an infallible sign of the truth of another world, and a being entred into it here; so as to breath another air, and from a state of darkness to be taken into a *marvelous light*, which once it is sure I knew not, nor could credit its reality on report; yea a light by which I discern the truth of spiritual objects to be as real as I see these heavens and earth by the light of the Sun, and am taught the way of sensible converse therewith. Now when thus he reflects, does not there meet in one demonstration, the two greatest things can be desired until he be in heaven, which are the *certainty of the written Word*, and of his *state and being in Christ*; and thus see, how they answer other, and each so indissolubly tied, that no clear satisfying evidence can be of the last, but in a serious pursuit of the first.

Sect. 3. Such is this subject, and the serious *improvement* thereof, as might lead us in to know that notable art of Religion more in its *practice*, which may be truly called *Scientia archite^ctonica*, an art for extracting out of all occurrences of the time, and the strangest providences, what should tend to our further fixing in the truth, and make it easie and clear, how to reduce the works of God unto the written Word; yea, to resolve his judgments through the earth in their true cause and original, which I must say from trial, is one of the rarest of essays men could pursue against Atheism, and for assuring our heart more of the being and faithfulness of God, when thus it's seen how all the lines of providence lead from the Scripture, and return hither again, and do most visibly begin and end there; so that whither a discerning Christian looks, yet cannot he look off this, though he go from one creature to another, and from one piece of the work of God to another; but all still meets with a most obvious tendency to make this demonstration clear, *That God is true*. For my self, I seriously profess, when such dark Clouds are now casting up, and amazing occurrences, so many

ny things to imbitter the world, this is the most strengthening discovery I find within time, that such clear glances of the *faithfulness of God* there are, and these so convincingly shewed forth amidst the greatest darkness and confusions, as leaves no access to debate the certainty thereof; for nothing else I see but what might help to crush and make faint, if this were not so sure, *God hath spoken in his holiness*, and nothing hitherto hath failed thereof; what was the word of *Luther*, *Pene desperassem
nist Christus esset caput Ecclesiae*; might we not now say, if the same truth stood not good to us, and that the saddest of events brings so much in them, to strengthen, and be a further Seal to the Word: But now is the Church sore tossed, we can also see the need thereof, and when such rage and hatred there is against godliness, that it gets no worse entertainment than was foretold. Is the truth avowedly opposed and born down? there doth the Scripture take place. Is it reproached? it behoved so to be. Yea, is it by subtlety and under a cover of friendship assaulted? this also is some part of its own accomplishment. Do we not see, wickedness is still the same? and that it is the same Spirit

rit now acts in the worst of men that was in former ages? which should no less tend to a confirming us of the certainty of the Word, than the truth of holiness; have we seen any such dark hours as did ever want a witness to that blessed Promise of a watching Providence over the Church? but when he smites with the one hand, he is still found to uphold by the other; and no such concurrence of things to cause grief, but something as remarkably set against it, to be matter of joy and encouragement in the Lord; nor in any time is such poison vented, but the very same time is found to bring an antidote with it, and the greatest assaults against the Truth made subservient for her further triumph. Now it is sure, this is no dream, no romance, or a conjectural thing, but what in the greatest composure of Spirit, each Christian can discern and know its truth to be as undeniable and clear, as it is certain there is a Sun that shines in the firmament. What an inestimable advantage is here, if we knew how to improve it, that under all the varieties of providences within time, we may go in and out and find pasture, and thus get our faith more strengthened, in seeing how men are forced

ced to promote Gods design by opposing it, and in resisting his will to fulfil it; the smallest things made subservient to great purposes, when the most promising appearances are blasted; how most are every-where thronged about personal interests, and their own things taking them up, whilst the holy God does most convincingly turn all for his end. Yea, if we knew how to follow this great discovery, we should convincingly see the greatest surprisals of Providence which upon no principles of reason men could foresee, or any connexion betwixt the means and such a product; how exactly they answer the Word, and are a Seal thereto. I shall but add, how it is not more obvious, that to every creature, faculty, and operation, there is as it were a thread fastened, by which one may follow up and see *that God is*, than it is discernible here, how close a conjunction is betwixt the Word and each piece of his Work, yea every step of providence in the earth; whereby we may know, he is that which the Scripture declares him to be.

Sect. 4. This peculiar advantage should Christians make of so great a discovery
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of the *faithfulness of God*, and how nothing fails of all that he has spoken in his Word; for adventuring with a more full security on these *rare Politicks of the Bible*, which concern mens interests within time; yea thus to steer their course under many vicissitudes of this life, by such Maxims of divine Policy, which can neither err nor possibly admit a fallacy or mistake. I must touch this a little, it is so strange how small weight even with most of professed Christians these seem to have; and whatever respect they witness to this blessed record, in taking it as their security for a life to come, or any spiritual interests; yet is it not seen, how visible an exception is made in their reliance on the Word, for things of this life, but they will needs strive to be wise in their actings, like the men of the residue of the Nations, and have the eternal and unchangeable Truths of God come down to their mould and reasonings; which is an Atheism too manifestly owned everywhere. Oh what can this mean, to half the Scripture of God in such a manner, as to adventure with some professed security, on what is there for an eternal interest, but on other principles and contrivances

vances go for their concerns within time ; yea so far allow themselves to lay this aside, as that which they think cannot possibly suit the posture and condition of their outward affairs : But for clearing this truth, I shall first offer some things to shew with what demonstrative evidence a Christian may adventure here on the certainty of such infallible Rules, for all his temporal Interests, as well as these that concern an after-state ; And next offer some particular instances, where this demonstration may be more clearly understood.

First, Can we admit a divine Authority of the Scripture, and not see how the faithfulness of God stands good for every line and syllable there ; yea, that these Rules it holds forth, must be no less sure for the least of a Christians interest, than for an eternal salvation by Jesus Christ.

2. Is not this beyond all possible debate, how great an interest mens outward lot and concerns have in the written Word, that though no respect unto the command, principles of self-love, and the interest of *gain* as well as of *duty* should oblige to a close adherence thereto.

3. Though it seems as a romance to many,

many, yet must we either quit the Scripture, or credit this, that the most infallible rules for one to raise his fortune, and insure a destiny that can controul the Stars, are given forth there, where that evidently is found, *sapiens dominabitur astris, & quo modo unusquisque faber potest esse fortunæ sua.*

4. Are not these Rules also known and tried, so as the experience of all, who have followed the way of the Lord, did yet never fail to witness.

5. And is it not clear, how such rules there are, of that universal Truth, as in no time the contrary was ever seen to be true ; but the greatest Sun-shine on mens wicked devices, and their contrivements of sinful Policy, are still seen in the close to have some sad and tragick result ; yea that the bringing these to pass, hath most convincingly tended for their further ruine.

6. Is not the true cause visibly writ forth here, whence the falling out of events is so frequently seen to be cross to all ordinary rules and method of second causes, and the wise disappointed in their work, for attaining such ends, as could not but be expected to follow thereon, from appearances to reason ; yea that such fruit-

fruitless inquiries, with anxious and inordinate toil, the sad miscarriage of most desired and deeply contrived projects, is so usual a sight in the world, so as mens hearts are sometimes ready to despair of all their labours under the Sun; that the Scripture hath so little credit in their private concerns, but will steer their course by some other compass for attainment of what they intend.

7. Is not this with greatest evidence demonstrable, how practical prudence is the native effect of piety; and what helps to make one more a Christian, hath a necessary tendency therewith to make him more wise; and to these rare accomplishments of true Policy; when these are so clear: How much it helps to get command over the heart, and the moderation of passions. 2. For one to know and discern his own way, which is to be wise at home, and in what his nearest concerns lye, *Prov. 14. 8.* 3. To improve the present Providence, and every change of his lot, for some further gain, so as he can follow his interest, by abasement as well as abounding, and get up by that which seems most to depress him. 4. To have a more clear view of the consequence and

and future issue of things, by knowing how to discern time and judgment, *A wise man foreseeth the evil, and hides himself, Prov. 23. 3.* 5. Such also is its true tendency, to cause that temperature and counterpoise in the Soul, amidst these continued vicissitudes here, as he can rejoice with fear, and have his greatest confidence under guard of a watchful circumspection. 6. Is it not evidently found, in so far as one walks by these rules, how his hand worketh by the guidance of his heart, and does then act dextrously? which *Solomon*, that great observer, did so much regard, *Eccl. 10. 2, A wise mans heart is at his right hand, but a fools heart is at his left.* Yea then is light found to shine on his paths, for a more clear and easie getting through these incumbrances which are found so distracting, and ready to sink the spirit of others.

8. For such as lay the whole Scripture aside, and have no such weight upon them of an eternal state, It is not strange this should have no credit for their interests within time; but is not here matter of astonishment, what respect and confidence men witness, for adventuring upon one part of the Bible, who visibly shew they

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have no confidence for the other ? Can such be in earnest to improve supernatural Truths there for spiritual things, who see nothing of its use on this account, what a sure trade they might drive in order to their temporal interests, (yea whilst they converse not with the very notion of such a thing)? I must say, no reason can comprehend this, how principles of self-love should have so little influence on men ; nor can it be answered, but by admitting one of these two, that either the Scripture is not truly owned and believed by most of professed Christians as a security, on which they can adventure their heaven ; since the same assurances are there by the God of truth, for mens interests here in the way ; or that such knowingly betray the end they propose to themselves in their labours under the Sun , and act in direct opposition thereto, by so strange a neglect ; and laying aside of the Scripture.

Having premised these , for giving light to so concerning a Truth ; let us but clearly state so great a duty, as the practical use and improvement of the Word is in a temporal case, and with respect

respect to our present interests in this life, as well as these which are eternal ; that we may see the infallible connexion is betwixt the one and the other ; *for he hath shewed thee, O man, what is good*, as well as what is just, and where the surest method and way lies for one to seek himself, and be wise for their own private interest ; yea to attain and enjoy an outward lot with unspeakable more advantage, than most let themselves know, to prevent disappointments, with sore and stinging crosses, that may be seen comes not out of the dust, but are a product that all might discern from the Word, such means they chose to themselves must bring forth. It is clear, that the same light which shews the way for being eternally saved, lets men also see an exact and infallible method, in all their concerns within time, and for such a conduct as they may *walk surely*, by rule, and not at an adventure for this end ; the slighting whereof hath caused many with sore toil sow the wind unto themselves. I come now to instance some of these rare *Politicks*, and highest *Principles* of Wisdom given to us in the written Word, in living up to which, one may

as it were chuse his own fortune; I offer these, which are such as we may fear more it shall cease to be day and night, seed-time and harvest, than that any of these fail.

1 Principle, That to secure the success of our way, in the appointed use of means, nothing is so effectual as a through commitment thereof to the Lord; as it is clear, *Ps. 37. 5. Prov. 16. 3*; and a truth hath such a Seal from experience, that since Religion was in the world, I must say none ever tried it in vain; but the want of this hath instructed many to their cost, how deceitful a thing the greatest abundance of means oft prove. Now for confirming it, let us but compare the remarks and histories of all times with the Word, and I am sure it can be hid from none, how the most sad ruining strokes are seen to be a Pit of mens own digging, and most observably hath met these, who would chuse a way to themselves, and frame a Policy of their own, in counteracting the Word, which did at last undo them.

2 Principle, If the Scripture be true, mens Interest and Policy here then is, That it is better to trust in God, than put confidence in man; yea better to trust in God,

God, than put confidence in Princes, Psal. 118. 8. which is a truth that never shamed the face of any to this day who adventured thereon, but oft hath their returns exceeded their venture. And most remarkably these have been even before the world set against one another, which we see, *Psal. 52. 7,8. Lo this is the man, that made ^{not} God his strength, &c. But I am as a green olive-tree, I trust in the mercy of God for ever.* No time can make that thrive on which the Lord puts so dreadful a mark, as he hath done upon humane confidence, *Jer. 17. 5.* But we may see, it was never more discernible to the world than at this day; with such a breaking of visible props, as calls aloud to *cease from man*, and thus be instructed, how *men of low degree are vanity, and great men a lye*, *Psal. 62. 9;* so as to know the alone certainty of that which is, *v. 7, In God is my salvation, and glory; the rock of my strength and my refuge, is God.* But oh how rare a practice is it in the world, to rowl the burden of an outward interest so fully on God, as to have the heart at a true repose and quiet, when visible appearances are not.

3 Principle, Though nothing be more cross to the Politicks of this age ; yet it is clear, That to court humility is the rising hand, and the surest way for preventing humbling strokes, as we see, Mat. 18.4. And which seem strange, though convincingly obvious in all times, that Christians lying near the dust in a low self-esteem , and being much on their knees, will keep such more on their feet, than the eager graspings of others at that shadow which flies the more it is followed. *Nam sic descendendo, ascendendum est in via Christiana.*

4 Principle, That the surest mean to have adversaries gained to be friends, is by having our ways directed to please God, Prov. 16. 7 ; and thus endeavour a commanding our selves to the conscience of men, but not their humours ; for which so great an assurance is in the Word, with that convincing seal from experience, and the remarks of every age, as a Christian can solidly reason ; When I follow my duty, then it is sure, I follow my interest ; and in consulting how to be accepted of God , and give him the preference to all, I keep the straight line to gain both on the conscience and respect of others. I know some will object the sad entertain-

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ment *faithfulness* gets in the world; and which cannot be denied, how close adherence to the way of God, hath brought many under a dark cloud; but is it not as certainly known with what advantage this hath still brought them out; so as their present loss hath brought a double gain, yea found to meet such many days after, even to the conviction of others.

5 Principle is this, *That it's more true policy to give to the poor, where no retribution can be looked for, than to give to the rich, Prov. 20.27;* which if designed for God, does also ensure its return, and compensation from him. I know nothing seems more cross to reason and the rules most in such a time walk by; but if the Lord be God, and the Scripture his Word and Testimony, there should be no halting here; for to these is an express bond given from heaven, and put in register here upon earth, in which he who keepeth truth with men for ever, hath ensured by his *faithfulness*, that *what is given to the poor, is lent to the Lord,* and he will repay it; and I must say, none ever took this in earnest for their security, and found it fail; but when it

seemed to be lost, and as cast on the waters, it hath been repaired, with a four-fold more to them or theirs. This I am sure many are debtors to witness; as also that no such Bank can be, for the large improvement of a little, and where the Principal will never be lost. But I must further add, in behalf of the *faithfulness* of God, what-ever seem to answer this duty upon the matter, a wrong end and byass in seeking acceptance with others will marr all, and be as a *dead Fly* in the Box which corrupts the most precious Ointment; for how can they put this debt upon the Lord, when that is their reward from man.

6. *Principle, That a publick spirit for God, is the best expedient for a mans own things, and to secure a private interest; and the want of this, the cause of saddest loss oft even upon that account;* this we may see, *Hag. I. 9*; which if there were more of an observing Spirit, could be under no mistake, why many *sow, and bring in so little*, with such personal grief, and bitter complainings at home; so sad a frustrating of the most painful endeavours, by an immediate blowing thereon from heaven; *Why saith the Lord*

Lord of hosts, because of my house that is vast, and ye run every man to his own house. One saith, shall I leave my sweetnes? and others, shall I leave my fatnes, to own duty in an evil time, and when visible hazard attends this? for which I may say upon the warrant of the Word, many now put their most endeared intersts to be as a butt of the holy jealousie and indignation of God.

7 Principle, It is not duty alone, but a matter of self interest, for a Christian to keep close under the authority of the Word, to prevent some sadder yoke; and their being put under that discipline of the Rod, which none can miss in some measure for their recovery, where mercy is in their lot; for thus does the Scriptures method lye, and the way to make a sore and afflicting burthen light that it is by bearing it, and a humble subjecting the Soul thereto, with which the sensible abatement of its weight will be found, Heb. 12. 7. Jer. 31. 18. It is evident, how mens rods are taken out of their own sins, and that it is their wickedness is made to correct them; yea, how sin and the rod grow up together, according to that, Ezek. 7, 16. where one growth may be seen for both,

both, *Pride buds, and the Rod blossoms-*
eth.

8 Principle, *That doing for the Lord, and a serious respect to him in it, is the surest way to prevent labouring in vain, and for enjoying long the work of their hand, Isa. 65. 22, 23;* from the want of which, what work and labour is lost, with the sore toil of many in the external duties of Religion, that will never redound on their account. Oh what an amazing thing is this, were it seriously considered, to see men in such earnest about a counterfeit shew, and to appear that which they are not, which so certainly leads into a real hell, and wants not some beginning here upon the conscience, yea betrays that very end they propose to themselves within time; for *the bed is shorter than that they can stretch themselves upon;* and is rare to find any get into another world, before the vail be taken off them here.

9 Principle, *That a serious following the work of the present day, is the best way to provide for the event of the next, and for such who have but one hope, and all their dependencies on God, to have but one fear, that they go not out of the way*

way of the promise; this we see, *Psal. 37.3.* *Gen. 17.11.* And is it not found by continued experience, how making haste for bringing mens design to a desired issue, gains no time of a patient waiting on the Lord? but the want thereof hath put many some steps backward, when they seemed to make the furthest advance.

10 Principle, That *the way of the Lord is strength to the upright*, *Prov. 10.29.* And is that alone which can make their feet stand in an *even place*, when the world is reeling; this is a truth many have tried, and to this day could never bear another witness, but that it gives more in to such as closely follow it, than they could either lose, or give out on that account; yea that where men once find their hand to essay duty, though with sorest wrestlings, when the Lords going before to clear their call is known, then hath their heart and strength been remarkably found to follow.

11 Principle, That to be interested in *the blessing, is that which maketh rich*; and the most certain way for attaining such an end beyond all the devices of mens heart which can be tried in another road. I confess the faith of such a Truth seems to be little

little in the world, and the evidences thereof too obvious to be denied; though thus it is written, and by the faithfulness of God ensured to such who will give him credit, that it is his *blessing maketh rich, and adds no sorrow therewith*, Prov. 10.22. But to acquit his way, and certainty of the truth therein, of which one tittle cannot fall to the ground; I offer these remarks, with a serious appeal to the judgment and discerning of the most ordinary observers, if they do not see, 1. That there is an enjoying more in a little, yea a real possessing some have of more than others of the largest measure: Now it is sure riches can only be understood as it reacheth the end for which by all it is sought after, satisfaction to the mind; and not to have these things, but to enjoy them; without which, what is most desirable to the sense, can have no pleasant taste. 2. Is it not known such a visible income by the blessing there is, as causeth a real subserviency of the little of some for the owners use, and to go further than the great things of others, so as they are made *to abound and have no lack,* whilst these who have gathered much, have *nothing over,* but in the fulness of their sufficiency are in want. 3. It is sure,

in no time this can be hid , how some-
thing is above the care of the mind,
or labour of mens hand, to cross or pro-
mote an outward interest, a falling in and
surprisal of some Providences, which from
no appearance, or the remotest tendency
of outward causes, could in the least be
foreseen, but comes most visibly cross to
the present scheme and posture of their
affairs, that in one day is found to undo
more than many years had set up. 4. In
this I need but appeal to mens eyes , as
well as to their reason , if the pretended
riches of many who unquestionably have
a great share of outward things, be not a
false cover under which the world may see
what anxiety, trouble, fear, and most bit-
ter complainings are, and how rare such an
instance is , to whom riches is given in
their hastening out of the way of the blef-
sing, and not a large measure of sorrow
added ; so as it is really no such thing that
most have, but a Serpent instead of bread,
where the sting is more sharp than the ho-
ney sweet ; it is as the husk, when the sub-
stance thereof may be oft found in the
house of the poor more than in theirs. Oh
what a mistaken thing is this , that with
such eagerness is grasped after , if there
were

were more of the true use of reason, when it is so certainly known that something there is above outward causes to imbitter the most plentiful lot, and take the use thereof from some, and its comfortable use from others, whilst it is no less clear, the true joy and satisfaction of many in their lot, yea what a sun-shine the blessing causeth such live under, on whom the world did never seem to smile; and what does this mean? is it not to shew the performance of that Scripture, which in no time can fall to the ground, *That the blessing of God maketh rich, and adds no sorrow therewith.*

12. I shall but add one Principle more of that excellent Wisdom given in the Scripture, for mens being wise to themselves, by their following duty, *How it is the interest of State, and beyond all these Politicks, or Arcana Imperii, for its preservation,* which seems most infallible to many, *to seek the promoting of truth and godliness;* for if these should wear out, and go away, the Land cannot possibly be safe where once they had an abode. I know, to mention this in such an age may seem for no other advantage, but to expose these Truths to the derision of such who

who know no interest the Bible or its Rules can have in the management of state affairs, yea look on these who are in any measure serious to live up to the truth and principles they profess, as the sorest grievance of the place they live in; so sad a requital must such often meet with, who I may say, next to the long-suffering of God, are the greatest means to prevent their Countries ruine ; but it is sure, this same reason stands good, which *Esther* made use of, *Chap. 7.4.* if *these perish*, and the *truth be sold*, though with the greatest price of appearing advantage, and that all should hold their peace, yet could it not *countervail the Kings damage*, and so inevitable a ruine to the publick interest of the state which must follow thereon ; for these are clear :
 1. Whatever reacheth a stroke to truth and practical godliness amongst men, it doth the same to the greatest security of Government, and that which founds the strongest obligations to any Civil and Moral Duties. 2. Is it not manifest if these wear out and be depressed in a Nation, moral righteousness and truth amongst men will quickly follow, and the greatest security for all personal interest is so

so far gone? 3. And is it not obvious to reason how the same essays to depress truth and practical godliness in a place, must help Atheism and a prophane Spirit to get up, which hath so direct and native a tendency to weaken the Politick body, and emasculate the spirits of men to obstruct the vigorous improvement of natural parts; yea, most remarkably does depress and change the very *Genius* of such a people. It is true in such parts where the truth of religion had not come, none will deny what singular advantage there hath been both of Natural and Moral endowments, as of old in *Greece* and amongst the *Romans*. But from no Records of times past could this ever be seen, that these were found with the departing of the truth from a place after its being professed and owned there; for which how sad a witness is a great part of the world this day, where it may be seen, the darkest night of Barbarism and Immorality hath befallen these places in a special manner, where the light of the Gospel once shined, as much of *Africk*, and where these once famous *Astatick* Churches were does evidence. 4. Can there one instance be given, of a Nation's prospering, that oppo-

opposed and fought a depressing of the Truth where it had once been received ; but this all may see, who are serious to observe, how the most remarkable ruining strokes that have come upon a place have had some visible falling off, and notwithstanding of the Truth to go before ; for then Will it not be with such a people as in former times to brook that peace which had been formerly known there before the light shining amongst them ? but the Scripture makes it clear, that the *red and pale horse*, and he whose work is to take peace from the earth, does immediately follow a rejecting of the Truth. It is known what a flood of Judgments did fall in after so great a growth of *Arrianism*, and that height which it came to, not only by seduction but persecution. And can it be forgot what did so immediately precede these desolating strokes on the *German Empire*, which was upon so remarkable a violence and depressing of the Truth in *Bohemia*, and other places there.

Sect. 5. This peculiar *Improvement* might Christians make of the present subject, with such clear discoveries of the continued verification of the Word ; To have some further reach and discerning of things

to come, and what yet is before the Churches hand, than what most satisfie themselves with. A Truth in which is to be understood no following after secret things, which in the deep Counsels of God are shut up from men; nor is it to know times and seasons, and pursue a wisdom above that which is written, which were to invade his Prerogative, to whom alone this belongs to know things contingent with their proper Circumstances, & foresee them falling out when no possible tendency of second Causes can be alledged thereto; for Divine Revelation is the alone Rule and Measure of our knowledge, and the bounds set by the Lord, beyond which there must be no more search: Yet is it clear, that a concerning Use and Improvement of the Scripture lies here, and some part of the Christians work to consider the truth of its accomplishment, as it looks forward to future events as well as for things past. We can blame our selves only that we live not in a more clear and comfortable view of things to come when so much advantage is for this: yea, we see how the Scripture speaks of things there as already past, to witness not only

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the certainty of their performance , but that such a converse we should seek after by seeing them in the Word, as if they were present in an actual existence before us? therefore is it thus expressed, *Rev.* 18. 2. *Babylon is fallen.* But for clearing of such a duty in so dark an hour on the Church , I shall lay down these three Particulars to be considered. 1. What solid grounds there are to point out our way here, and let Christians see what length they might come by Scripture-light, and without extraordinary Revelation for a clear and comfortable discerning of some future events , which at this day are upon a certain approach. 2.. This also must be taken along with the former, what restraining bounds the Lord hath set, beyond which there must be no further search. 3. I shall offer a short touch at some Particulars in so very dark and astonishing a time as this , to witness how clear and refreshing a look might be had of some great things to come as if they were now present before us, by getting up to that Watch-tower of a near converse with God in the Word.

For the First, it is certain no Vessel at Sea keeps more exactly by the Card and

Compass, than the Church-Militant does by the written Word which stands open at all times for us to consult how her course lies and keeps her way, and how well the crossest winds fall in with her motion.

2. Though extraordinary ways of revealing Gods mind are now ceased, yet are they still the same in the Scripture as to the substance thereof, to which as a great height a Christian may get up in a serious enquiry after the Truth, so as not only to discern present duty but things in their approach when at a distance, which the Word is yet to bring forth, without any thing of that *Lumen Propheticum*, which in former times was known.

3. Is it not clear, how in the Scripture there is a perfect *Idea* and comprehension of all these vicissitudes and changes which are to go over the Churches Head here, in what designs the Lord hath upon the after-Ages of the world; so as thus her fate and destiny is brought to light? yea, is there not in the Scripture this day a standing Record of the ancient Judgments of the Lord, where men may see the Copy and Presidents of his Providence for after-times of the Church set in their sight?

4. As it cannot be denied what extraordinary discoveries some in these last times have had of future things, and remarkable exigences of the Church, whose eminent holiness and sobriety made it the more convincing to others : yet even there did the General Rule of the Word still go along with them, and had no new things revealed but what was contained there, though carried therein by a singular impulse of a Scripture-Spirit to apply the Rule to particular Cases and Persons ; but this are we not to look after, nor is there cause when so much in an ordinary way may be known by a humble, serious inquiry after the Counsels of God in his Word.

5. Is it not clear how *Daniel* understood by Books, what yet was to come of that full accomplishment of the desolation of *Jerusalem*, and the years thereof by what he found in that Prophecie of *Jeremiah*, *Dan.* 9. 2. where we may see him there on the same scent (whatever otherways he had of an extraordinary spirit) for discerning things to come by this sure way of setting the Word and Event together ; for which though there needs a special irradiation of the mind and a

Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation, Ephes.

I. 17. Yet is that such as in an ordinary way should be sought by every one of the Saints: But oh! we stand as it were upon the flat and low ground, and know little what a being more abstract and separate for such an end is, and have a near converse with God in that great study of his Word and Works in the world; and therefore is so little known how great a length Christians might reach in the way of ordinary gifts and means to know the deep things of God, and what lies hid from the eyes of most though written forth before us in the Word.

6. That special care the Mediator hath for his Church and People that no sad trial and vicissitudes are to fall out, but the Word is suited to give warning thereof before-hand: nor is there such a stroke whether on a nation or a man, but the cause thereof may be clearly found in the Word if there were more serious converse with it: men need not be at such work as some are in searching out the fatality and periods of Kingdoms and States to trouble themselves with the intricate numbers of *Plato* and predictions of *Astrologers*, when so clear a response from these infallible Oracles

racles may be had, & by a serious enquiry there, comparing the Word with the continued course and conduct of Providence in all Ages of the Church some solid ground to see that respect general denunciations of judgments to particular times, yea, from a national sinning & falling off from God foresee the certainty of national judgments.

7. Is not such an unchangeable series and order of things in the Scripture as may cause a safe arguing from the Causes to the Effects : for though conditional Threatnings be not declarative of the eternal purpose of God about the event, but are moral Legislative acts ; yet is it clear they express an undoubted connexion betwixt sin and the punishment thereof , that at *what instant the Lord speaks against a Nation and Kingdom to pluck up, root out and destroy,* as we see *Jer. 17. 8.* if the condition be not interposed of repentance and turning to God, then is it infallibly sure and obvious though outward appearances seem'd never so cross, that such a sentence will not fall to the ground.

8. Thus also may we discern the Churches Rising and Cure to be so far begun, as evidences of a through humbling

work under her stroke are manifest, when such are made to come with weeping, and a power therewith to wrestle, who before lookt as a people bound under such Bonds as they could not shake off: then may we know it is a *Crisis* tending to life, *Jer. 13. 19.* and some previous stir and motion amongst the *dry bones* before they get to their feet.

9. There is solid ground whence at a distance it may be seen, what manner of judgment may be feared, since the Word does so particularly circumstantiate this That *a sword shall be sent from the Lord to avenge the quarrel of his Covenant, Lev. 26. 25.*

10. It is clear also the time and near approach of judgment, may so far be seen from the Word by a discernible ripeness & height, that a Peoples sin is come to in some prodigious acts of wickedness; and when no access the Word hath to reprove, when the Judg oppresseth and *asketh for a reward, and the people love to have it so,* which shews the fields becoming very white for judgment to put in the Sickle.

11. Such as enquire seriously at the Word, may find cause to discern the wearing out of a House and Family, and
of

of consuming strokes to come on their offspring that have been remarkably given over to the sin of uncleanness ; for such a sentence is given forth from him against that sin whose Word never fell to the ground, *They shall commit whoredome, but shall not increase*, Hos. 4. 10.

12. I shall only add this how easie it may be to discern some humbling stroke near, and undoubtedly to follow, whether on a Nation or a Man, where swelling pride and insolence goes before ; for this is a sure application of the General Rule, *Prov. 11. 2. When pride cometh then cometh shame.* And *Chap. 16.* That this goeth before destruction.

In the second place, let us consider these restricting bounds that the holy God hath set to his peoples enquiries, that there be no over-stretching the Rule, or a going further than the clear light of the Word goes before them, which I shall here particularly touch. 1. We may pursue no *wisdom above that which is written*, nor so much as look into that Ark of the hid things of God, which he hath shut up : It is sure there is large enough room and bounds in the Bible to arreit the most unsober spirit, and give them

them work there. 2. The Sovereignty of God and an awful impression of this on the soul must still bound the Christians furthest enquiry; since it's clear, he so walks by Rule as his Prerogative also takes place, w^{ch} these marvellous surprisal of grace have oft witnessed in meeting thus a people at their greatest disadvantage; for who could have infer'd such a Consequent from these Premises, Isa. 59. 17. *For the iniquity of their Covetousness I smote them, and hid my self, and they went on frowardly in the way of their heart.* Now should not judgment inevitably follow according to the Rule? nay, saith the Lord, who is Sovereign, and in his way infinitely above our thoughts, I'll answer all with one Cure; *I have seen their ways, and will heal them.* 3. Whatever length is to be reached in the discerning future events by the Word; yet here must all keep a due distance, Acts 1. 7. that it is not ours *to know the times and seasons which the Lord hath reserved to himself*, as to any peremptory determining in such a case; though it is clear also that with a safe warrant we may enquire about the season and near approach of Scripture-Predictions, so far as previous signs thereof are by the

the Word given for such an end. 4. It is here the Lord hath set bounds as to the way, mean, or particular circumstantiating of Events beyond what is expressly written and made clear from Scripture-light. The matters of God are rolled on invisible *wheels*, whose motion gets oft out of our sight, and riseth so far above humane reach, that men can find nothing after him so as to restrict the glorious God from one step in his way to the same method and circumstances in another piece of his work. Thus the Scripture shews, *How darkness is under his feet, and thick clouds round about*, even when he comes to deliver his people. 5. These bounds must all our enquiries have, that they be in order to duty, and lead to some practical improvement for the work of our day ; for thus were the men of Issachar, wise to discern the times, not to answer their own humour, but that they might know what Israel ought to do. The prudent foreseeth the evil and hides himself, and this solid use and advantage should be lookt to in discerning what the Lord is about to do ; that Christians may know what to pray for what to expect ; that their heart may go alongst with these ends the Lord is now

now bringing forth : And is not here matter of serious exercise in a day when the hearts of the godly are so low , as their spirits seem to fail, and be ready to say, *our bones are dried, our hope is past, and we are cut off, Ezek. 37. 7.* to know what aspect the written Word hath on a sinking Church. I love no overstretching our Hope, but it is strange there is not more improving the Scripture for our comfort against present appearances, from such clear demonstrative evidences we have there, of things to come ; and what shall be *the end of these Wonders*, whereon we now look with such amazement.

These things being premised, to prevent mistakes about this subject, I shall adventure in following Scripture light with some awful regard to these bounds the Lord hath set to our enquiries here , to touch this in a few words more particularly , as not unseasonable in a time when many are at work to kindle a light unto themselves , and walk in the sparks thereof ; and so woful a trade of divination hath got up in the world, that men will go to *the God of Ekron*, by seeking an Divinity either in the Stars above, or from the Powers of darkness below, as though there

were no God in *Israel*, or such a thing as his written Oracles to enquire at : But if *Lord be God let us follow him*; and if the Scripture be his undoubted Word, I must say none need be in the dark about things to come ; as to what is bringing forth for the Church in the great event of these last times, when this blessed Record is so near, which came down from Heaven with a fulness of light unto men , for all that concerns them to know here , and now with so clear and certain a sound speaks.

I. From what point the Churches motion unto this day lies, since Antichrists hight and reign we know is over with the great Apostacy of the Church expressly foretold under 'the New Testament ; for thus by keeping sight thereof , and more near converse with the Word in every step, and turn of her way, it might be easie to discern though at midnight, the certainty of her course, and how exactly it keeps with the Card and Compass, where a full Map of her Journey and passage, through time is held forth ; yea how far she hath got by the most hazardous part in her whole passage ; and now seems near to a falling under the favourable aspect

spect of some most remarkable Promises in her behalf ; thus also is there solid ground to expect one of the greatest Conjunctions that was ever known to the Church , is not only to come but on some near approach, I mean of *Promises* which from former Ages have been sealed up, with their performance, of the prayers of the Saints, that long have waited before the Throne , and their full return, yea , of some very eminent Providences for making these effectual.

2. This from the Word, we may with clear evidence know what ever appearances seem to contradict, That *a sad hour of temptation is coming on the world*, and on these whose work hath been to trouble the Church ; where this clear ground is that the faithfulness of God stands good, to put a *Cup of poison and trembling in the hand of her Afflicters*, Isa. 51. 22, 23. and cause such *wring out the dregs of that Cup the Churches have drunk of*, Psal. 75.8. Nor hath it ever bin found that Judgment begun at the House of God and stayed there, or that the Nations were a sore rod in his hand upon his people, but a judgment on these quickly followed, to shew forth the righteousness of the Lord in recom-pencing

pencing tribulation to such for what they have done ; and make way by a day of vengeance for the year of his Redeemed to come.

3. This we may discern from the Word, by comparing the times and present state of the Church therewith, that a work of judgment seems yet to go before her further rising, and these sore pangs and throws in the birth are not past, that most immediately are found to make way for approaching mercies ; the *Scripture-grounds* are these. 1. The method of Providence, that with every step of the Churches exaltation some previous down-casting hath still kepted proportion thereto : Nor is it found through the Scripture where any great thing the Lord hath done for his Church, but a remarkable hight of trouble hath gone before ; but is here any thing strange or matter of hesitation, where the light of the Word goes so clearly before ; that when one of the greatest events in behalf of the Church since the Messias came into the world, until his second coming in the full destruction of Antichrist, is in bringing forth a time of trouble and dismal darkness beyond what former ages have known

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go before such a brightness. *2d. Ground*, Is it not too manifest such evils now follow the reformed Churches, that it may be said in no time was it ever known, the Lord passing such by without some visible mark of his anger put thereon; There needs no instancing of these, where the discoverie is so manifest. *A 3d. Ground* is this, that we have seen judgment begun, but no seen fruit thereof, strokes treading on the heels of other, yet do not reclaim. And is it not a Scripture-Inference, when a people will not be reformed, they lie near a further stroke, yeais to be feared that which comes with a cure, may be very sore ere it hath done its work. *O who shall live when God does this!* Can we be in the dark after all that is seen this day what is coming, for such clear presages are at some times of a future event, as it may be said what *Amos shews, c. 3.8.* *The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophecy?* we can discern the face of the skie; But oh how strange is it when spiritual judgments have gone the length almost of wearing out the Churches, (which must yet have a recovery) that a sound of outward Judgment is not more continually in our ear! Is it time to be found lying in the hatches of the Ship asleep when such

such unusual presages are before us. I may not in the least question where the Scripture is so clear ; that great brightness which yet waits on the Church ; to which all her trouble must make way ; and that the time of the killing of the witness , and their prophesying in sackcloth is now past ; yet there true is cause for fear of some unusually sharp and searching trial , and that *ultima clades* on the reformed Church , is yet to come , that may cause much shaking where there is not a through establishment in the Truth .

¶ 4. What-ever height the Churches trouble come at , yet have we solid ground for this ; it shall not be long , nor such a lying storm as in former ages ; but we know the adversaries wrath , though great , is now bounded to a short time in these latter days ; and that the brightness of the light of the Gospel does much ripen the harvest , for judgment to put in the fickle : Yea , though sad and very dark intervals must fall in , yet is it clear , the great work and intent of Providence in this time is , to put forward the Churches interest , make way for its enlargement , and bring her begun and growing victory over Antichrist to a more full peri-

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od, as is ensured, *Rev. 10. 7. ch. 12. 12.*

5. It is no conjectural event; but such with greatest assurance we must believe, that there is a second rising the reformed Churches shall yet have in the power and spirituality of Religion; where an immediate appearance of the Lord shall be no less seen, than in that first and marvelous recovery of the purity thereof, which for many ages had been over-clouded: The grounds are; 1. So remarkable an opposition as at this day is thereto in the world, over which the Mediator must prevail, and have the decision of that strife on his side. 2. If it be sure the Churches shall yet recover and rise; must not the cure be where the ruin and wearing out hath been most evident: And such a blessed return of the Sun, as will bring heat and love therewith, to be more answerable to their light? 3. Without this the truth of many Promises yet to be fulfilled, could not be understood in the event, which so expressly point at such flourishing times of the Church, as shall have a more bright and hot Sun-shine of the power of the Gospel, and pouring out of the Spirit therewith; so as *the name of that place shall be called Jehovah Shammach, the Lord is there, Ezek. 48.35.* 6. Though

6. Though nothing seem more cross to outward appearances, yet is it sure, as the Lord is true, whose word is passed thereon; That whosoever have engaged their power to support the *Romish Interest*, and heal that deadly wound it hath got by the Gospel, shall lose the day, and find their cause desperate: for the issue of this war is determined and sure, the party with whom these contend is Jesus Christ, he who was shewed *John*, *Rev.* 19. 13, with his Vesture dipped in blood, whose name is called the *Word of God*, and hath the Armies of heaven to follow him; yea by many degrees of wrath hath his design already taken place; which can be under no debate, when the Lord hath begun, but that he will also make an end, and no retrograde steps are in his way, as is clearly ensured, *2 Thes.* 2. 10. *Rev.* 13. 10. ch. 17. 14. Nor is there cause to be staggered in the faith of the approach of *Romes* fatal period, though we should live to see *Brittain* and the Churches abroad on a sudden over-run by the rage of that beast; and her light eclipsed by the *Romish* darkness; but to look thereon according to the Scripture, as the *ultimus conatus* of that wounded adversary; which would

be found to have an immediate connexion with the ruin of Antichrist, and with the reviving and following glory of the Church; for *strong is the Lord God who judgeth her*, Rev. 18.8.

7. This also on solid ground from the Word, we are called to believe, that no new assault by Antichrist and his followers can be this day against the Church, but must help to put her interest forward, and be for the furtherance of the Gospel; since it is clear, that by a continued war betwixt the Lamb and Antichrist, is every step of the Churches rise advanced; which were it seriously considered, the most formidable appearances of trouble from that party, should with more comfort than fear be looked on. Yet, is not here from the Lord some part of his peoples mercy, that they go not out in haste, nor get a hasty delivery, but such as one step thereof may still fit and dispose for another.

8. It can be no conjectural event, where the Scripture is so clear, of some very immediate appearance of the Lord, by making bare his arm against this adversary; that will be such as hath not been seen in former deliveries of the Church,

Church; since the day he made his power known at the Red Sea; for thus in Scripture is it held forth as a type thereof: Therefore shall the *Song of Moses* be sung; though not of *Moses* only, but of the *Lamb*, as importing something more glorious, and some greater brightness put on this, which is the most illustrious act of divine judgment, reserved to the last times, and upon the greatest adversary that ever Jesus Christ had upon the earth. It is true, The Churches help lies now hid, and in ambush, *Rev.* 1. 8. *I saw by night, and behold a man on a red horse;* and where was this? it was *amongst the mirtle trees that were in the bottom*, which lay not in the worlds view; but then was the earth *sitting still*, and *at rest*, as we see v. 11. whilst the Mediator hath his forces prepared, and is ordering and acting forth instruments for his peoples delivery; but at last will make it known, that when he comes it is not too late with help.

9. That time must assuredly come, when a remarkable stirring up, and raising of spirits shall be, to build the house of the Lord, and be subservient to his design of Judgment against Antichrist; though such in which nothing of instruments shall obscure

the brightness of his appearance; but bear a convincing witness thereto. It is clear, there hath been no great piece of service for the Church, but some remarkable raising of instruments hath been previous thereto, see *Ezra.* i. 5, *Hag.* i. 14. And for what is to come, is not the Word most express, *Rev.* 14. 5. That such under the Mediators conduct are making ready, who are *chosen and faithful*; yea which must take place, That some of the Kings of the earth, even such whose forefathers had given their power to uphold the *Romish* Throne, shall so effectually concur to execute that Judgment written against that adversary.

10. Though we are to believe, that many shall be rescued by grace from that *Romish* darkness; yet is there undoubted certainty for this, for which the Word is gone out of the mouth of the Lord, That he will never have peace with that Party and Kingdom; and no possible treaty or reconciliation can be therewith, until the blood of the Saints which they have shed be avenged; for with this adversary hath the Mediator declared war from generation to generation; who with the great *Anathema* is accursed to the second coming of the Lord; yea is judicially se-
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cluded from Repentance, Rev. 16.9, *And they blasphemed him who had power over these plagues, and repented not.*

This also is clear, what-ever present appearances now speak, That assuredly the day hastens, and will come, wherein the Lord shall roll away the reproach of his Church before all the Nations, and cause her rising and brightness answer the furthest measure of her abasement, and her enemies be found liars unto her, in their prædictions as well as reproach ; which though at this day is marvelous, how it can be effectuate ; the Promise will make way for it self through all these difficulties.

Set. 6. This peculiar use might Christians make of such a subject, and that certainty by the experience of the verification of the Word on their Soul ; *to be more fixed in the truth, against error and the subtil assaults thereof* ; when from a practical acquaintance with these Truths which others impugn, they can with the furthest perswasion of heart put their seal to the same ; and have an argument from within, which all the world cannot answer. How many scoff at assurance of salvation, the

inward witness of the Spirit, yea at the
 Doctrine of Imputed Righteousness, who
 never knew the sure and sensible effects
 thereof on their Soul; but there the
 judicial rise and pedigree of error may
 be seen, 2 Thes. 2.10, *Because they received
 not the love of the truth, &c.* It is not
 strange, to see what liberty some of this
 generation take, to sport their wit and in-
 vention about the Scripture, who know not
 these near approaches of God there, in
 the verification of his Word; nor how clear
 and convincing a witness there is from the
 experience of Christians, in so much, that if
 most within the Church should deny the
 truth of a divine efficacious concurrence
 with the Word, beyond what is objective
 & moral; those could not but put their seal
 thereto, yea how natures light can be no test
 and measure of supernatural Revelation;
 from what they certainly know, and have
 proved of the certainty of these truths,
 which are above all reason to comprehend,
 though not contrary thereto. Thus they
 know how little their own activity and be-
 stirring themselves could do, without a su-
 pernatural influence; and that to will as well
 as to do must be given them, for which they
 are not sufficient of themselves. And what a

sad mistake is it of true liberty, to have this lye in an equal indifference to good and evil; can that be any begun part of the perfect liberty which is in heaven, or is that the liberty which is attained by a Christians further growth in sanctification, that brings therewith a further distance and abhorrency of sin; yet none will deny this is a more near approach to that state of the Saints above, where alone true and perfect liberty is. Thus from sure experience also, Christians can witness against these who deny a standing Ministry, and revile so divine a Ordinance, (which is one of the most peculiar engines of the Devil, he makes use of against the Truth), that they know Christs speaking in them, and working by them with a most discernable authority and power in the serious following their Masters work; yea how by the Doctrine of the Church, which meets with so much contradiction everywhere; they can assuredly say they received the Spirit, and knows it to be the Spirit of holiness which does in all correspond with the Written Word.

Sect. 7. This special Improvement may be obvious, which the present subject, were

were it rightly considered, leads necessarily into, to have our spirits thus fixed in a more full assurance of the Doctrine and Principles of the Reformed Church, as they stand in opposition to Popery; upon these grounds.

I. That it is so evident, what most effectually tends to clear up the Truth and Divinity of the Scripture; does inevitably strike at the root and foundation of that Interest; since this cannot be in the dark, except we quit the use of reason. That the greatest Controversie betwixt us and the Romish Church, where the true state of the question lies, is here, if the Scripture contained in the Old and New Testament be of Divine Authority; or whether it and the Romish Bible, which is Tradition, and the infallible dictates of their Church, be the Rule and Foundation of Faith? according to which decision it is most clear, their cause stands or falls; which is in effect upon the greatest head of Atheism, for if the Scripture be not the sufficient and sure *basis* of the Christian Faith, all may see it can have none, whatever alledged, but what is from Reason demonstrable to be a notorious falsehood, and the Christian cause lost. I know this

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may seem too great a challenge, whilst they do not professedly disown that Divine Record; but what a mock homage is here? And is it not thus worse used, with a more insufferable indignity put thereon, than the most avowed Atheists could do; to put out its eyes, as the *Phe-listims* did *sampsons*, and then bring it forth to make sport before the World, which is indeed their greatest enemy, and plague; though they are not aware, that it will undo their mirth, and at last pull down the house above them. Can the truth of this be denied? Yea, how with the highest contempt and derision they deal with the Scripture; as such who would take a Sovereign Judg, whose Authority used to be venerable to all, and put a Servant upon the Bench above him; whilst he must not only sit in a lower place, but have it declared to the World, that none regard what he says, since to them he can speak no intelligible sense; nor hath any decisive power, or Authority more than the meanest of the people, but what is from them alone; Now, is not this to declare him no Judg, but a dead Image set up for sport, with much more Indignity than to thrust him out

out of doors. I confess they have taken a sure way to end all disputes, nor needs any more contending about particular truths of the words, or to cite its Authority; when these are their known and professed Principles. 1. That the Church of *Rome* can make that Scripture, and to be authoritatively binding to their Conscience, which was never writ in the *Old* and *New Testament*; so as they have such a large ground to go upon, that nothing possible can put them to a strait. 2. That the Scripture it self hath no decisive voice, until theirs precede; nor any Authority, but what is precarious, and dependent on them. 3. That to go in unto this blessed Record, and seek the Counsel of God there, is but to consult a mass of dead unsensed Characters; that can have no intelligible sound, nor articulat voice, until the Romish Clergy cause it speak, and put a sence thereon: And thus is the letter of the Scripture undeniably passed from and no other Bible but their sense and meaning. 4. That there is no founding the Christian Faith on any certainty of Divine Truth in the Scripture, nor on that ground, *This saith the Lord*: But, Thus do their Church say, and the Pope as supream Head thereof.

of. 5. That the very Being of God, the Death and Resurrection of Christ, must have a dependence on the Church ere they can be Articles of our Faith, and be believed. It is sure, there is no access to deny that these are Romish Principles, which they must either own, or impeach their greatest Writers of falsehood, who so expressly maintain the same; but if these hold, it may then be said their work is done, and are got out of all possible reach of Protestant Arguments; with this one Answer; You have no *Bible*, or any thing to prove your Religion, but what you must have from us: So as the great work of the reformed Churches this day is to appear for the Truth of Christianity, and that such an authentick, and sacred Instrument of Truth, certainly is, whereon it is founded.

2. This *advantage* is for being more thoroughly fixed in the Truth against Popery, from these clear discoveries of the Scriptures accomplishment, and what near converse is to be had therewith by experience; That thus it is sure, the Scripture can be known with the greatest Certainty of evidence to be the Word of God, without all dependance on the Church. Which makes void one of their greatest Fundamentals,

mentals, that none can be assured thereof, but by the Churches testimony. It cannot be denied, that the whole frame and structure of the Romish Church; with that appearance it hath this day, is a singular help to confirm the truth; where all may see these Prophesies that concern The Antichrist, under the *New Testament* so visibly fulfilled: But I hope that gives no ground for a necessity on us to take the Truth of the Scripture implicitly off their hand; and I am sure there is none else.

2o3. This *advantage* there is from the present subject, for being more solidly fixed in the Truth against Popery; That we can thus know, and keep sight of the state of the reformed Church, and the whole series of Providence about her in the most remarkable changes she hath been under; both during Antichrists, and since she begun her rise: where it is so evident, how exactly all answer's to the Word, and that her case hath not been more low, afflicted, and latent, than is there held forth; and how certainly the Lord hath performed his Truth, in what length hitherto his work about her hath come.

2o4. Is it not thus, by the clear evidence of the Scriptures accomplishment, and a serious

serious converse therewith, we may see the certainty of Antichristianism in the World (which as an event of the Word behoved to take place under the *New Testament*) how convincingly it is verified in the Doctrine of the Romish Church ; such as all who are in earnest so far as to compare this with the Written Word may know how not only different from the Truth of Christianity revealed there it is , but most visibly destructive thereto ; as this day hath been fully cleared before the world by the labours of such, who since the breaking up of the Light, were helped of the Lord to contend against this adversary. And now, since Atheism and Popery do so visibly make way for other ; and such clear access is this day to discern Antichrist (in whom the Scripture hath so great a Seal to its Truth) by the professed Doctrine of that Church ; I shall shut up this Discourse, with some touch thereat, in as few words as the Truth with plainness may be expressed, in the following *Appendix.*

AN APPENDIX,

*In which a short and plain account is given
of the Romish Doctrines, in their di-
rect opposition to Scripture and the truth
of Christianity.*

SECT. I.

Qu. Since mens greatest interest here is to know the Truth and Certainty of that Religion they profess ; What is to be understood by the Protestant Reformed Religion, as under such a designation it is now held forth ? *Answe.* If we consult the Scripture of God, unto whose tryal this offers it self, it may be easie to know, That it is no new Doctrine brought in upon the world ; but the Truth of Christianity, by the good hand of the Lord on the Reformed Churches, confessed, asserted, and purged from the corruptions of Popery , and hath the very same grounds to prove it, which the Christian Religion hath. *Qu.* Can this be clearly demonstrated, when it is so short a time since the name of Protestant, much less as a Church was known ; and visible appearances seem

seem to bring in question the Truth of its being, and succession ; when Popery for many ages had a conspicuous, and flourishing state ? *Answe.* We deny not the *Reformation* to be late, and that name of *Protestant*, which had its rise from a solemn protestation of several Princes, and Cities, against the Popish Doctrine and Power ; but these also are most clear. 1. That it is the same Truth and Religion of the Apostles, and Primitive Church for divers ages wherein they walked ; though in a great measure after corrupted, and darkened as Antichristianism grew up, which hath been unanswerably proved to the World. 2. That in the whole Scripture, no ground can be shewed for a continued visibility of the Church, as an unite Body, and in a flourishing outward state ; but we find the contrary expressly foretold, how obscure and low her condition should be during Antichrist's reign : So as a *place of biding* was then prepared for her. 3. Yet is it demonstrable, how there did not want, even in these darkest times, some visibility of the true Church by a continued succession of witnesses who appeared for the Truth, and against the Romish Apostacy ; which as a fresh River, made its way through that horrid Lake, without mixing therewith. 24. Is there not some infallible Rule and Judge, for determining matters of Faith within the Church, and on whose decisive sentence we may securely rest in the greatest controversies ? *Answe.* If we own our selves Christians, there can be no debate here, that the Scripture contained in the Old and New Testament, is the supreme Judge from whom no appeal

ppel is ; *The Oracles of God* committed to the Church, Rom. 3. 2. to give answers in every dark case. *The Type and form of sound Doctrine*, Rom. 6. 17. Yea, that to whose sentence we are in all matters both of Faith, and Practice, expressly referred by the Lord, Isa. 8. 20. *To the Law, and to the Testimony : if they speak not according to this, it is, because there is no light in them.*

S E C T. II.

Qu. Since it is sure, the Rule of our Faith must be plain, and intelligible ; Can the Scripture be such, which according to the Popish Doctrine, is but a Mass of dead, unsensed Characters, until their Church put a fence thereon ?
Answ. If men will credit its own witness ; we see, what was written there, *was for our learning*, Rom. 15. 4. and given for this end, that it might be understood ; and how it is *such as make the simple wise*, Psal. 19. 7. We see John wrote not to *Fathers only, but to Young Men and Children* ; 1 Job. 2. 12, 13. and does not the promise of the *Spirit to lead us into all truth*, Joh. 16. 3. belong to every Believer, as well as to the greatest Doctors of the Church ; who pretend to no extraordinary Revelation for leading them ? But the World may see it is not the obscurity of the Scripture, against which their true quarrel lies, but it's too clear evidence, before which their interest cannot stand. *Q.* But are not some things undeniably dark there, and hard to be understood ? *A.* None does deny, but some Scripture-truths lye

not so obvious to our discerning as others, and that several Prophesies were sealed up until the times of their taking place in the event ; but if men will not stumble at noon-day, nothing can be more plain, than the Fundamentals of Christianity, and these Truths which are necessary to Salvation : And is it not found what is dark in one Scripture, made clear in another ? Therefore are we called to *search the Scriptures*, John 5.38. as importing some diligent, and serious scrutiny about the same. *Qu.* Is it not expressly shewed, 2 Pet.3.16. how there are things *hard to be understood in Paul's Epistles, which they who are unlearned and unstable, wrest to their own destruction?*

Ans. Here is not the least Ground for a forbearing to make use of the Scripture, but a most sad account given by the Apostle of some, whose *ignorance, instability, and perverseness of will, by wresting the word did meet here, as the great influencing cause more than the darkness of the Object, which thus could not but be to their own destruction*; by whom none can judg was meant the whole Body of Believers, except the Doctors of the Church.

Qu. But what Warrant is here for all to read the Scripture, when the *Romish Church* so expressly forbids this, as the greatest cause of Error and Heresies ?

Ans. It is a strange cure, to keep from the Light, for fear of going wrong ; and when Jesus Christ saith, *you erre not knowing the Scripture, Mat.22.29.* that ignorance thereof must be the way to keep us right. But it is clear the Command is express

for

for all to read this, and teach it to their Children, Deut. 6. 11. And David makes it a mark of the blessed Man, Ps. 1. 2. And that we should search the Scriptures, Joh. 5. 39. Yea, was it not on this account the Bereans were so highly commended, for examining the Apostles Doctrine by the Written Word, Act. 17. 11.

Qu. What Induc-

ments should the Romish Church have, to a practice so visibly cross to the Rule?

Answ. I

confess they have this Plea, That there is no Law for necessity; since there case so stands, they must either ruin their Church, and be discovered in the greatest imposture, that was ever known in the World, or have the Bible shut up, though it be to ruin the Souls of many Millions of the poor people; nor is it strange such hate the Light, whose deeds are evil, lest they be reproved.

SECT. III.

Quest. CAN the Scripture, be a deciding Rule to our Faith; which derives its Authority from the Church, according to the Romish Doctrine, without whose sanction, and consent, it must be no Scripture to us, nor Canonical?

Answ. I know it is one of the greatest Principles they hold, to secure their interest, so as they may be alone Judges in their own cause; and for that end put down all credit, and Authority of this Divine Record; that it can give no sentence against them, but be as a blank

Paper, to bear what Impress they put thereon ; but it is most clear, the Apostolical Church had no such claim, 2 Cor. 1. 24. *Not that we have dominion over your faith, &c.* and how they brought their Doctrine to be tried by this light ; yea, none will deny but that an *Angel coming from Heaven,* and an *immediate Voice* thence, is above all humane Authority ; yet are we commanded to look beyond these to the Scripture, as our Rule, Gal. 1. 8. 2 Pet. 1. 12. And if the workings of the Holy Ghost on a Christians soul be known and tried by the Word ; can the *Romish* Church be the first Standard and Rule , at whose bar and decision this must needs stand or fall. Q Thus every private man should be his own judg, and not the Church to put what sense he please on the Scripture. Ans. Here is no ground to deny an authoritative Judgment to the Church of Christ, and a special respect thereto ; though it is Ministerial , not Sovereign and absolute, according to the Law , and in pursuance thereof, not above it ; for *there is but one Law-giver, who is able to save and destroy,* Jam. 4. 22. And no power against the truth but for it, 2 Cor. 13. 8. Nor do we in the least deny that necessary and excellent use of a teaching Ministry, *Whose lips should preserve knowldg, and at whose mouth we are to ask for the Law.* But no blind obedience is imposed thus, since the meanest Christian hath a judgment of discretion to know and discern the truth, that his service may be reasonable service, Rom. 12. 1. and his Faith a rational act ; for *every man must prove his own work,* Galat. 6. 4. Q. But are not all commauded to bear the Church,

Mat.

Mat. 18.17, and implicitly rely on its sentence. *Ans.* Who could possibly infer thence, the Scriptures-authority to be not binding to us, until it hath this from the Church; we know the Command there hath a peculiar respect to Church-censures, but it is as clear the furthest observance of the Apostles, was to be such as must not go without these bounds, *Be ye followers of us, as we are of Christ:* And it is sure this Command also is given, *Prove all things, hold fast that which is good,* *1 Thes. 5.21.* But if thus the Bible must be shut up, and men hear only what the Romish Church says, under what a necessity are these to live & die infidels, who being shut up by a close imprisonment, or in some remote parts of the earth, that excludes from all possible converse with their Church, since the Scripture can be no such to them, but must be kept close; or if they adventure to look thereon, not believe their own eyes, for what they see and read.

S E C T. IV.

Q. I S it not enough to answer all, the Romish Church is *Infallible*, & the Pope as Supreme Head thereof, such who cannot err in what he teacheth from his Chair; which is one of the most essential requisites of the Rule of faith. *Ans.* We know the true Catholick Church is secured by the Promise of God from a final apostacy, and *that the gates of Hell shall not prevail against her;* but it is clear they must bring another Bible, than the Old and New Testament, to prove an Infallibility thence to any Church upon the Earth. Were not

the Apostles fallible (though not in their Doctrine being therein immediately inspired by the Holy Ghost) when so ignorant in the Death, Sufferings, and Resurrection of Christ? and it is sure Peter was far from this when he denied his Master; nor after he was confirmed, and had that assurance given that *his faith should not fail*, (which is on great foundation of the pretended Romish Infallibility) when *Paul smot him to the face, Gal. 2. 11?* and does not all know in after-times, what Decrees of Councils have been against Councils, and Popes against Popes.

Qu. Is it not clear how Peter was the Rock on which Christ promised to *build the Church*? *Mat. 10. 18.* *Ans^w.* That Scripture does sufficiently clear it self, that by this Rock was expressly meant the Doctrine and Confession then made of Christs being the Son of God; and none can deny that power given there to Peter, was in as express terms given to the rest of the Apostles, *Mat. 18. 18. John 20. 22.* But will it ever be found how Peters claim to *Rome* is made out, or that he was there, and whence each succeeding Pope comes in to be his Successor? and where it is said, *Ephes. 2. 20. Ye are built on the Foundation of the Prophets and Apostles.* Is there then any Note of difference put betwixt Peter and the rest? yet here is the great Foundation of their Church.

Qu. Is not thus clear ground for such an Infallibility, that the Church is called the *Pillar and Ground of truth, 1 Tim. 3. 15.* *Ans^w.* We know this was said of the Church which Timothy was over; that none can say was the Church of *Rome*, to which the

the same Apostle wrote also ; or evince their peculiar claim beyond other Churches thereto ; but if the least ground were to infer an infallibility from this, it should then respect the Church over which *Timothy* was, I mean the multitude of Believers there, and not the Leaders thereof ; for the words are thus, That *thou mayst know how to behave in the House of God, which is the Pillar and ground of truth.* But 'tis most clear, here is held forth the stability and fixedness of the Church-Universal, whatever falling off be of persons ; yea, particular Churches that yet this stands as a Pillar, according to that *Jer. i. 18.* *I have made thee a defenced Pillar, and they shall fight against thee and shall not prevail.* But all know stability in the Truth, and infalliblty are vastly different, and no possible reasoning from the one to the other. *Qu.* But is not something evident from the Scripture, to shew a difference betwixt Peter and the rest of the Apostles, as to his precedence, and that the Monarchy of the Church was established in his Person ? *Answ.* We find Jesus Christ exactly prohibits such a thing in the Church, yea, to the whole Apostles without exception denies any such absolute Authority, *Mat. 23. 10.* *Be ye not called Masters ; for one is your Master even Christ :* But if any shadow were for this, it might seem on more ground applicable to *Paul* ; when he says, besides these the *cure of all the Churches came on me.* *2 Cor. 11. 28.* I confess, if this had been said of *Peter*, the Romish Writers would have made a strange noise, as if they had found one demonstration for all to secure them.

SECT.

SECT. V.

Qu. Thought the Scripture Authority be given to the Church, and not dependent on the Church; yet is there safe adventuring on this alone, whilist the Romish Doctrine expressly holds to be deceitful, and insufficient as a Rule of Faith without Tradition.

Ans. If men credit the Scripture and its Testimony to be true, it does expressly resolve this, how the alone way for being saved, is in following what is written there, John 20. 31. These things are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that believing you might have life through his Name; and this with such plainness held forth as if it were prophetically direct to answer the same, 2 Tim. 3. 13, 15. From a Child thou hast known the holy Scripture, which is able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for instruction in Righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Qu. But doth not the Apostle command to hold fast the Traditions, whether by word or Epistle delivered to us?

Ans. How strange were it to reason, from the duty of holding fast what was immediately taught from the Apostle by Word, being the very same which was delivered by Epistle, to our receiving the Traditions of the Church of Rome, which are not only things different from the Scripture, but most visibly contrary thereto; when neither

neither Scripture, Reason, nor Antiquity, lets us see their being delivered by the Apostles.

Qu. Is there not such an *Infallibility of Oral Tradition* as cannot possibly deceive, whereby the Christian Faith and true sense of the Scripture have been delivered down from hand to hand, and on which with greatest security we may resolve our Faith?

Ans. To this of late does a part of the *Romish* Church flie, who know not how to stand, or where to retreat from the light, which presseth them so far; though it seems this hath been in such haste, as they adverted not to its visible repugnancy to Scripture and Reason: for can it be judged there is a more sure and plain delivery of Truth to us by mens speaking, than by writing; or how a certainty of the sense of their Traditional Doctrine should be more than of the Scripture? though this we see that the vilest Pamphlet that ever was writ could be no worse dealt with than the *Romish* Church (I mean the Leaders thereof) do with these *Divine Oracles*, who expose it to the derision of the World, as a piece of unintelligible non-sence; but unless all certainty of the Christian Faith be passed from, this Principle must stand, that with most convincing evidence and plainness the Doctrine of Christ, and the way for being eternally saved, is delivered to us in the Scripture: against which the declared intent of *Oral-Tradition* is to resolve our Faith not on the Testimony of God in his Word, but on what the Fathers and Fore-fathers have told to the Children. And can there be possible access to deny how far Tradition in a few ages differs from it self, which hath been the alone
rise

rise of such fabulous Romances the World hath been full of about matters of fact, from former times ; yea how oft the Church hath been almost swallowed up of ignorance and error, so that if one would trace back that Doctrine that *Christ is truly God* by Tradition, they must lose the scent when it came to *Athanasius* times, who was the alone known Witness, against such a horrid deluge of *Arrianism* ?

Qu. Is not so far

a necessity of Tradition as the Scripture is not sufficient to refute all Heresies in the Church ?

Answ. Can it be possible to understand Heresies, but as they are against the Scripture ? or how to have another conception thereof, and yet this not sufficient for their refutation ? this is I confess a Doctrine meet for such who can make contradictions meet and agree at their pleasure.

SECT. VI.

Quest. **H**ave we not safe and unanswerable Ground from the *Antiquity* of the *Romish* Doctrine, and its long continued Succession, to found some Infallible assurance of its Truth ?

Answ. None can deny these , 1. That the Scripture is the truest *Antiquity*, and what is not according to this is a novelty brought in on the Church. 2. That the rise and pedigree of the *Man of Sin* must be traced back to the times of the Apostles in his beginning to work, whose gradual breaking up did then hasten to a more full appearance. 3. This is most clear also, that the Primitive Church for some ages knew

knew no such things as *Popery* in so horrid a corrupting of the Christian Doctrine that after followed, nor what an *Universal Bishop*, and his *Infallibility* meant. *Qu.* But can any evidence be found from these first times of the Christian Church, that will import a contradicting the *Papish* Doctrines as it is now professed? *Answ.*

There are no accidents, where the thing it self hath no being; nor could these possibly write against Popery in such Heads as the *Romish* Infallibility, the Worship of Images and Saints, &c. before they were once brought to light; but this by undeniable consequence may be seen, that they held the Scripture to be the Rule and Foundation of the Christian Faith; therefore not the *Romish* Church; yea, and that the Counsel of God was clearly revealed in the same; therefore not to be shut up as the Fountain of all error; yea, that there are but two places after death, without the least touch or mentioning such a thing as Purgatory; this also was the known Doctrine of the first times, that Faith in Christ was the only way of salvation; theretore not by our own *merit*.

S E C T. VII.

Qu. Is it not the Doctrine of the Scripture, as well as of the *Romish* Church, that we may be saved by an inherent Righteousness, and the *merit* of good Works? *Answ.* This is not denied but we must go to Heaven by merit, though not our own; yea, that upon the exactest terms of justice is due to him who hath payed

payed the price to the utmost value, that none of his purchase be lost, but to us it is only of grace, as is most clear, Rom. 11. 6. *If by grace it is no more of work, otherways grace is no more grace.* Ch. 4. 4, 5. *Now to him that worketh is the reward, not reckoned of grace but of debt; but to him who worketh not, but believeth in him who justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.* And what can be more clear than that Decisive sentence thereupon?

Chap. 3. 28. *Wherefore we conclude, that we are justified by faith without the deeds of the Law.*

Qu. May not some though in an unconverted state yet merit a conferring of grace upon them, by putting themselves forth to the utmost for their own conversion, which the *Romish Church* call the *merit of congruity.*

Answ. If it be a Truth which *Isaiah* speaks, this must assuredly be false, Ch. 64. 4. *But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness as filthy rags;* and that here is the alone Fountain-cause, that maketh one to differ from another, Rom. 9. 15. *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy;* then no plea can be from merit, by any improvement of mens natural abilities; nor can there be so much as an active concurrence for such a chang, when it is so clear, before renewing grace comes, that all are the Children of Wrath, who of themselves cannot frame their thoughts to that which is good.

Qu. Yet is there not a merit from the works of the regenerate, which follow Justification, that is such as may deserve eternal life, not from the imputation of Christ's Righteousness, but their own intrinsick worth, and proportionateness to the reward, which is called the

the merit of Condignity ? *Answ.* This doth most visibly subvert the whole Contrivance of the Gospel, which is a judicial transferring of our sin as a debt on Christ the Surety, and of his Righteousness and Merit to be imputed to us for our Justification, without any respect to works. and layeth down the very same way of life to us which was in the Covenant of Works, as is clear, *2 Cor. 5. 21.* *Qu.* Do we not find Heaven held forth as a reward, *Mat. 5. 12.* ? *Answ.* No reward of Debt can be found there; but to shew it is only of grace, and no proportion betwixt that which is given, and their working, we see those who came in at the last hour, had the same measure with them who had wrought all the day, *Mat. 20. 8& 9.* And can any merit be understood in that claim and reckoning the greatest labourer must still make, when he hath done all he can, that he is but an unprofitable servant ? *Qu.* Is it not promised, *Rev. 3. 4.* that some shall walk with Christ in white because they are worthy ? *Answ.* It is clear the Lord doth account these so, whom he hath accepted in his Son, and for whose sake alone it is, *1 Cor. 4. 7.* For who makes thee to differ from another ? and what hast thou which thou hast not received ? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it ? *Qu.* Yet is there not some undoubted necessity of Works here even in order to salvation ? *Answ.* Nothing can be more clearly owned and asserted than this is by the Reformed Church, that though Works come not in as causes of our Justification, yet are they necessarily required in the Subject and Person justified, as the inseparable

rable fruits of justifying Faith, and by which the Truth thereof is declared to others, as is evidently shewed, Jam. 2.18.

SECT. VIII.

Qu. If all merits by men for themselves be void, what safe adventuring can be on the over-meriting of some for others; or on that great treasure thereof in the Romish Churches hand, from the works of supererogation, on which their Absolutions and Indulgences are founded?

Answ. So horrid an imposture as this may let us see what it is to be given up of the Lord unto strong delusions; Could the Wise Virgins spare of their Oyl for others, Mat.25.

9. yea must not every one prove his own work, and bear his own burthen, Gal. 6. 6. But how should it possibly be known, that such an overplus of merit is, and is more than they need themselves, or is any Scripture-rule yet found for the same how to apply it, or in whose hand to put this trust.

Qu. But what should that mean, Col. 1. 24. of the Apostles filling up what were behind of the Sufferings of Christ in the flesh, for his Bodies sake, which is the Church?

Answ. Will any aver this was of Christs expiatory Sufferings, or that any thing lacked thereby him who is able to save to the utmost, Heb. 7. 25. But here is most clearly shewed, that as his Sufferings were the price of our Redemption, so were they for a Seal and Witness to the Truth, John 18. 37: upon which account hath the Saints

in all following ages a share, for filling up the Sufferings of Christ in his Body, which is the Church, as their Testimony to the Truth; which the great Witness himself did seal and confirm with his Blood, who before *Pontius Pilate* gave a good Confession thereof.

Q. Does

not that seem to warrant these plenary Indulgences and Absolution of the Popish Church, with their Power to apply the merit of others for that use, which is so express, *John 20.23. Who-soever sins ye remit, shall be remitted?*

Answe.

It's a strange Commentary which destroys the Text, and from Christ's cloathing his Ministers with a special authority for his service, to infer thence, that it is their right to have his room also as Judges, they are indeed impowered by their Masters Commission to declare sinners to be bound by their sins, and loosed from them according to the Rule of the Word, in a right application thereof; and there the validity of that declarative sentence is ensured, as they follow the Command and Rule given for that effect; but no shadow of ground can be here if men quit not their Reason: for what such pretend, and to absolve or release souls out of Purgatory.

SECT. IX.

Q. Is there not clear Warrant for the Doctrine of *Purgatory*, when so great a stress of many of the Romish Principles visibly lies, then that though there is an acquittance from eternal Death for such as are truly penitent; yet

is there a place after this life, where for the expiation of Venial sins, for which their prayers, and penances here could not satisfie Justice, they must be for a time tormented, and suffer the pains of Purgatory? *Answ.* It is sure no such thing is revealed in the Scripture; but 'tis clear there, that Sin only can be expiated by the Blood of Christ, the end of whose sufferings was to sanctifie his Church, and present her without spot; and how the Saints go to no such place after death, is most evidently shewed; *Ecclef. 12. 7.* how their spirit returns to God who made it; *Isa. 57. 2.* They shall enter into peace; and *2 Cor. 5. 1, 2.* Where the Apostle makes it clear, there is no middle betwixt our being *unclothed*, and *cloathed upon* with that house from Heaven; yea, 'tis sure the converted Thief should never have got by such a place, if from the want of penances, and Church-indulgences this must needs be suffered; and that the infinite merit of Christ were not sufficient for all: But this is manifest charging God with injustice; as exacting double satisfaction for Sin, one from Christ, the other from the sinner. *Qu.* But does not the Apostle shew there is a being saved, yet so as by fire? *1 Cor. 3. 15.* *Answ.* If you read that whole Scripture, none will deny this to be a figurative expression; and how it is the same with that in *vers. 13.* The fire shall try every mans work, which none can expound to be Purgatory; but that not without temporal loss, so as to have their work *burned*, they shall escape. *Qu.* Are there not punishments here with such griefs and pains that follow sin, as on the same ground

ground may evince a Purgatory after this life?

Answe. What a strange reasoning is it from the temporal afflictions of the Saints and chastisements of a Father, which are for healing, and no effect of vindictive justice; to contend for these pains after this Life, which are for satisfaction to the justice of God, and to expiate guilt, which he only could do who underwent that Curse, that is due for the meanest Sin.

SECT. X.

Qu. Is there no Scripture-Institution, for the Romish Mass, which by that Church is expressly held to be a real, external sacrifice, propitiatory for the living, and the dead; wherein the Body of Christ is really offered up, yea, is such as hath the same efficacy, both to expiate sin, and purchase by doing thereof, spiritual and outward benefits which they give to the death of Christ.

Answe. It is clear there are no external sacrifices under the New Testament, and these under the Law were only Typical of that blessed sacrifice, which was accomplished in Jesus Christ;

who offered himself but once, Heb. 8. 27. And by this one offering hath for ever perfected them who are sanctified: Heb. 10. 14. So as this denies the perfection of Christs offering, his everlasting Priesthood; nor can it be propitiatory, which is without Blood, since without that there is no remission, Heb. 9. 22.

Qu. Can it be denied but some offerings are even under the New Testament unto God?

Answe. In the Lords Sup-

Supper we know there are Offerings of praise, and love; with a solemn commemoration of Christ's Death; but no external Sacrifice is there, for that necessarily must be destroyed in the act of Offering, which none dare say of the blessed Body of Christ, nor can it be conceived, how a repetition of the Offering up of Christ should really be, and not of his Sufferings also.

Qu. Did not

Melchisedek offer Bread and Wine, who was the Priest of the most High God? *Gen. 14. 18.*

Ans^w. His bringing it forth to *Abraham*, but not offering thereof is most clear from the Scripture; which gives not the least shadow of ground for that idolatrous service of the Mass; though on this they lay its greatest weight.

Qu. Are there not Priests now in the times of the Gospel, as there was under the Law?

Ans^w. There is one only, and eternal High Priest who is such as can have no successor; But what do they mean thereby? for it must be either to repeat over again Christ's Sacrifice, which is impossible and blasphemous; or to represent what was done by him, which then is a Sacrament, and no Sacrifice: Yea, even in this are they not manifestly divided, how to give an account wherein the action of Sacrificing consists, whether in the words of Consecration, *this is my body*, or in putting it on the Altar; but it is clear, *Heb. 7. 26.* That the Priest, and offerer under the New Testament, should be *Holy, undefiled, and separate from sinners*, which I judge they dare not own.

Qu. But how bad soever in it self this be, may not some be present thereto with a safe Conscience, when no evil thus is intended?

Ans^w. We ought not from these

these grounds. 1. The scandal, and offending our Brother; which is not to be judged from our intention, but from what is manifest too others in our doing such a thing. 2. The hardning Papists in their way, this being a special symbol of their profession whereby they are discerned. 3. That here is an obvious dissimulation before God, and with the adversary, in that professed communicating with them in an external part of Worship.

SECT. XI.

Q. **V**HAT *Sacraments* are under the *New Testament?* *Ans.* These two only are of Christ's appointment; Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, which have these essential requisites to a Sacrament of the *New Testament*. 1. An external visible element. 2. That it is of express Divine Institution. 3. That this be perpetual unto the World's end. 4. That it have a promise of Grace and Pardon annexed thereto by God, which is not only signified, but offered, and sealed to all who rightly partake thereof. **Q.** Are these other five *Sacraments* of the Romish Church, but a human invention; to wit; Confirmation, Penance, extreme Unction, Orders, and Marriage?

Ans. Since Divine worship must be understood according to the Rule given for it by the Law-giver; we can know no such: and it is clear by their own Doctrine, that from some of these their whole Church is excluded; the

Laity from Orders, and the whole Clergy, from Marriage.

Q. Is not Confirmation an

ancient practice of the Church?

Answe. That

only they can pretend, as a custom of the Church, in the Primitive times, to bring Children Baptized, after they came to some years, before the Church, and put them in mind of their Baptism, and engagements they were under in it: which they now turn into a Sacrament, and therewith use Chrism; which is Oyl mixed with Balsom:

That they consecrate, putting it on the forehead in the form of a Cross, with these Words; I sign and confirm thee with this Chrism of Salvation; giving them a blow on the face with other foolish rites; by which they say, the fulness of the Holy Ghost is given them: Which hath not the least sounding on the Scripture.

Q. But is not Penance a part of Repentance, and a visible sign thereof?

Answe. The publick profession of Repentance for open scandalous sins, is a duty, but it is clear, no such outward sign was ever instituted in the Word, as whipping, pilgrimage, &c. Yea, nothing more contrary thereto, than their declared meaning of this, which is a satisfaction to justice, and compensation of the wrong done unto God thereby: nor can they agree themselves about the Sacramentality thereof, some making the form thereof to be the act of the Priest's absolution, others not.

Q. Is there not clear ground from James 5. 14. for extream unction; in which with the Oyl of Olive consecrate, they anoint divers parts of the bodies of those who are on death-bed, with these words, I anoint such a place, that wherein thou

hast sinned thereby thou may be forgiven? *Ans.* For what the Apostle there mentions; the recovery of the sick person is most evidently intended, but this extream Unction is not used until the recovery of the party be past hope: Yea, the health there promised was miraculous, answering to that time when the Faith of miracles was in the Church; so as this is evidently temporary for such who had the extraordinary gift of healing: though the Elders of the Church praying over them when they had no such gift, we deny not to be perpetual.

S E C T. XII.

Qu. Is there not a clear ground for Christ's being

bodily present in the Sacrament; so as the whole substance of the Bread and Wine there in the act of Consecration, is turned into the substance of his Body, and Blood; which is the Romish Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*, and one great Article of their Faith? *Ans.* From the Scripture of nothing can it be more plain, than its remaining to be still Bread, and Wine, after the Consecration; in the Lords Supper: *1 Cor. 11. 26.* So oft as you eat of this bread, &c. And Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of this bread. *1 Cor. 10. 16.* The bread which we break is it not the Communion of the body of Christ? Yea, *Acts 2. 46.* where the partaking of the Sacrament is called the breaking of bread; in all which it is most expressly shewed to be still Bread: Nor were it a Sacrament any more,

more, if the sign should be turned in the thing signified: yea, is it not clear that Jesus Christ did visibly, and locally leave this World, whom the Heavens must contain, until the time of the restitution of all things, *Act 3. 21.* which should be a notorious falsehood, if his bodily presence were true in the Sacrament.

Q. Are not these

the very words of institution, when Jesus Christ took the Bread, *This is my Body?*

Answ. They

are; but nothing more usual in the Scripture than such figurative expressions, as this is, to shew the Sacramental Union betwixt the Bread, and Christs Body; as *1 Cor. 10.* *The Rock was Christ.* *Job. 15. 14.* *I am the wine,* which I am sure none can take in the literal sence; but I confess such need not fear to lose their cause, who from the Churches Authority, can make void Scripture, Sense, and Reason at once.

Q. Wherein should this contradict Sense, or Reason?

Answ. It is such a Doctrine, as expressly shews, we must not credit our own eyes; and that all who were witnesses to the miracles wrought by Christ, could have no certainty by their sight thereof, though those be given to confirm the truth unto mens senses; nor could a contradiction to Reason be found beyond this, that the accidents of Bread and Wine, such as colour, taste, &c. can remain without their proper subject; yea, that the same numerical body, should be in so many places at once, which in effect is to deny the reality of Christs Body now in Glory; and that it is humane and finite.

Q. Is there any safe warrant to administer the Sacrament

in both kinds, unto the people, since the Cup is

so expressly denied to these by the Romish Church ? *Answe.* If the Institution thereof, *Matt. 26. 27.* and *1 Cor. 11. 23.* be our Rule, this is most directly contrary thereto, and a sacrilegious robbing the people of the same; for these it is drink ye all of it; and this Cup is the *New Testament in his Blood, shed for the remission of the sins of many;* which none can deny but it must concern the people as well as the Priests, since the sign does belong to all interested in the thing signified: And though in the first administration by Christ himself, the receivers then were Apostles; yet in this act being the dispencer himself, he does manifestly enter the whole Christian Church in possession of such a priviledg, in the manner he gave it, wherin not the least shadow for this restriction can be found.

S E C T. X I I I.

Qn. *W*hatever charged be against the Popish Church, can there be just ground to charge them with Idolatry, from their practice in worshipping *Images*? *Answe.* It is not their alone practice but their professed Doctrine and Principle; That the *Images* of the Trinity are not for a shew set up, but for religious adoration, than which no violation of the moral Law can be more direct. *Deut. 15. 8.* *You shall not make to your self any graven Image, or the similitude of anything to bow down to it;* And *Deut. 4. 12.* *Ye did see no similitude, saith the Lord, in the day I spoke to you.* And if the turning of the glory of the Invisible

visible God into the likeness of a sinful Creature, Rom. 1:23. be Idolatry, none can deny this to be such. Qu. Is not here sufficient ground to clear them from such a charge, that they do not fix their worship on the Image, but on what is thus represented? Answ. It is impossible distinctions, will acquit before the Lord, and at the bar of his Word, justify what he hath expressly condemned, when it is most clear this is not only worshipping with our hands the Image, but all corporal adoration thereof, that is forbid as idolatrous worship. *Then shalt not bow down* ~~sharers~~ yea, none can deny but Arons Calf, and these of Jeroboams were intended for the true God, yet were most gross Idolatry; and therefore we find the Brazen Serpent taken down and destroyed, when once the people began in an idolatrous way of to look after it. Qu. Is there not much difference betwixt an Idol and an Image; since by an Idol is to be understood the resemblance of some false and feigned thing, but the other is of what is true? Answ. Though the one is usually taken in a worse sense, yet have they both one meaning as to the import of the Word; but if the Image of a true and real thing should acquit from Idolatry, the worshipping of the Sun and Moon might have then a favourable claim; But as it is clear all visible representation of the true God is forbid; so is it also impossible to express a spiritual and infinite being, by any corporal similitude? *To whom will you liken me?* Isa. 46. 5. Qu. Is there no warrantable use of Images? Answ. The use of Images is not simply condemned; for we find

some

some in the Temple by express command, though they were only typical, to shadow out things to be fulfilled under the New Testament : there is also politick use of Images a lawful for ornament, and to keep up the remembrance of Friends ; some Historical and for Doctrinal use ; but none should be set up in Churches, or thus any way set apart for religious Worship.

Q. Yea, is there not safe ground for the worship of the Virgin *Mary* and of the Saints, since this is not directed to them as unto God, but in a lower degree ?

A. It is too visible to be denied, with what horrid blasphemy the Romish Church gives unto the Virgin *Mary* which is alone due to the glorious God, and to pray unto her is most directly contrary to the command, *Deut. 6. 13. Mat. 4. 10. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* Yea, there is but one Mediator *Jesus Christ*, *1 Tim. 2. 5.* By whom our worship and prayers can be accepted.

SECT. XIV.

Q. **H**ave we no Scripture-Warrant, why the Worship of God in the publick prayers of the Church should be in an unknown Tongue, according to the Popish Doctrine ?

A. You may have the Apostles answer thereto, *1 Cor. 14. 2. He that speaketh in an unknown tongue, speaketh not unto men but unto God ; for who understand him ?* In which he shews there can be no visible Communion there, in such an act

act of worship, by those to whom it is an unknown language ; and lets us see what a contradiction to this one great end of publick Worship this is. Ver. 16. *How shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen, at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest ?* That is, such can have no real and heart-consenting therewith, which is indispensibly called for in this duty of publick prayer.

Qu. Is it not enough to entrust the Church-Guides with this, to whom the people make their Confessions ? *Answe.* Such an implicite reliance, we know was never taught by the Scripture ; but there is no cure where men will entrust their Religion and Reason at once to the disposal of others.

Qu. Is there not clear ground for that Article of the Romish Doctrine ; That under pain of damnation, there should be a Confession of the most secret sins of mens hearts unto the Priest ; yea, his very thoughts which are of any weight, so far as he can remember, according to that *James 5. 16. Confess your faults one to another.*

Answe. It is clear, that as much ground is there to confess to the people, as to the Priests ; nor is any such thing warranted by a Scripture-command ; but this assurance does it give, *That he who confesseth, and forsaketh his sin shall find mercy,* Prov. 28. 13. Which none will deny is there meant unto God : Nor did the Saints in Scripture know auricular Confession ; *I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin,* Psal. 32. 5. But we deny not the duty of publick Confession, in the case of publick and scandalous sins.

S E C T . X V .

Q. **T**hough the Romish Church in her **Doge** be found visibly repugnant to the Scripture ; yet how is that plea answered she makes for being the only true Church ; from **Anci-**
t**e****ri****ty**, **U****n****i****u****er****s****a****l****i****t****y**, and **a****n** **U****n****i****c****o****n****t****r****u****p****t****e****d** **S****u****c****ce****s****s****o****n** ? **A**nsw. For the first is an answer already given, Sect. 7. and for her **Unity**, besides that known distance they are at amongst themselves in many Doctrines, are they not visibly divided about the very Foundation of their Faith, and **Infallibility** of their Church ? whether this resolve on the Pope alone, or the Pope with a Council, or that late found-out Rule of Oral Tradition : as to that claim of **Universality**, it will shew a strange confidence when it is so known, that much more than the one half where Christianity is embraced through the world, does not at all own the *See of Rome* ; and for that **Succession** of their Church, and **uninterrupted Line of Popes**, they will not themselves offer to debate, how there hath been three Popes at one time ; yea, by what horrid means most of them got up to that Throne, their greatest Writers are forced to confess. **Q.** Is the Apostacy of that Church such, that there is no safe Communion with her, and being saved in that Religion ? **A**nsw. If *Rome* be that spiritual *Babylon*, Rev. 18. 4. as is there most evident, it is sure the command is peremptory ; *To come out of her*, lest being partakers of her sins, they be partakers of her plagues also. And is it not such

such a threatening, we may read, Rev. 14. 9. as should cause men to tremble who are not under some strange light of Induration ; yea, now since the breaking up of so great a light, are the Waters become bloody, Rev. 17. 15. **Q.** What can be seen of outward Inducements that they have in the matter of their Religion ? **A.** It is a strange cover must be over mens eyes, if they see not how its whole frame is a politick Interest ; the Scripture shut up to keep the people in the dark, and an *Infallibility* to secure all for keeping them under blind obedience, the Doctrine of Merit and Purgatory, a most visible lucrative Engine ; so as in that Religion it is most demonstrable, No rich man perishes, if his heart will serve him to part with Silver for his Soul ; for though he have no merit of his own, there is enough in the Churches Treasure of the merit of others to be purchased. It is indeed a sad Religion for the poor, whose sore Penances here, and Purgatory after, must make up what they want to lay out for a full Absolution : yea, may not all see its contrivance such, as the most licentious and gross can fully suit therewith, when thus they may sin at the highest rate and not fear their soul, since there is a retreat for all to the Popes plenary power for pardon ; and how by Auricular Confession they can know the most hid and close conveyances of men, and besorall their counsels, when thus kept under the awe of their threatenings.

F I N I S.

